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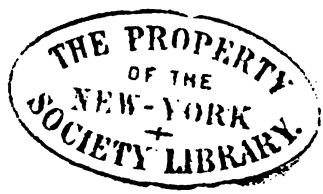
FROM

KINGDOM TO COLONY

BY

MARY DEVEREUX

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY SANDHAM



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ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM DRAWINGS BY HENRY SANDHAM

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From Kingdom to Colony

PROLOGUE

WHEN William, Duke of Normandy, invaded England in 1066, and achieved for himself the title of "Conqueror," one of those who accompanied him was Robert D'Evreux, younger son of Walter, Earl of Rosmar, feudal owner and ruler of the town of his name in Normandy.

After the battle of Hastings, in which William won so great a victory, he, wishing to honor the memory of the noblemen and knights by whose aid it had been accomplished, placed their names upon a roll which was suspended in a stately pile, called "Battle Abbey," erected by him upon the field of battle.

In the several exemplifications of "Battle Abbey Roll," as it was termed, the name of Robert D'Evreux is variously expressed as "Daveros," "Deverous," "Conte Devreux," and "Counte Devereux."

It was the close of an early May day in 1639. Charles I. was reigning monarch of England, and the Scotch Covenanters were disturbing his kingdom's peace.

Against these malcontents Charles had sent his army, and Robert Devereux, only son of the beheaded

favorite of Elizabeth, and now third Earl of Essex, had been made Lieutenant-General, he having already, by his resolution and activity no less than by his personal courage, done good service to the King and won much honor for himself.

On this May day, in Warwick, far from all scenes of war or rumors from court, Bromwich Castle, the home of Sir Walter Devereux, Baronet — cousin and present heir of the King's unmarried Lieutenant-General — lifted its turrets, about whose clinging ivy the late afternoon sunshine played golden and warm.

It was a huge pile, massively irregular in architecture, and its thick walls bore traces of those times when a Baron of England was a power in the land, — monarch of his domain, and chief of his own people.

A rugged old tower was its keep, flanked by four symmetrical turrets, and crowned by a battlement overlooking the whole country around. About these clung ivy in a thousand thick wreaths; and here and there, where it was not, the centuries had woven a fantastic tracery of moss, green as the ivy itself, and delicate as frost-work.

What had been the moat was now but a pleasant grassy hollow, carpeted thickly with golden cowslips and fragrant violets, their growing lipped by a tiny stream of purest water.

The castle was surrounded almost to its walls by the forest of ancient oaks, spreading in all directions, and becoming denser and more wild as it stretched miles away. And here were the deer, numerous and fat, that well supplied the larder for Sir Walter's board, or cooled their sides amid the rankly growing

brake and ferns, where naught troubled the intense silence of the dusky aisles save the whir of the pheasant, or the foot of the hare, light as the leaf dropping from the green arch overhead.

Sir Walter was in the forest this day, and with him were his three goodly sons, besides several retainers. The notes of the horn had come faintly to the castle now and again, as they pursued the chase; and up in her apartments Anne, the seventeen-year-old wife of Sir Walter's youngest son, sat watching for a first glimpse of the returning huntsmen.

Upon her knees lay an open volume, bound in white vellum, and with clasps of pearl. It was richly illuminated, every page presenting a picture gorgeous with color, and it was a carefully narrated story of travel and adventure in that far-away country across the ocean for which she and her young husband were soon to set sail.

She paused over one of the illustrations, and gazed at it long and earnestly, while her agate-gray eyes grew wide, and became filled with consternation. It was the picture of an Indian chief, in all the formidable toggery of war dress and paint; and his fierceness of mien brought to her young heart a hitherto unknown dread and terror.

The golden of the sun was turning to rose, when a clatter of hoofs and the sound of men's voices drew her eyes toward the courtyard below.

Resting her dimpled arms upon the rough stone of the window-ledge, she leaned over and smiled down into the upturned face of her twenty-two-year-old husband, whose dark eyes sought her casement ere

he dismounted from his tired horse, which the esquire at its head had now little need to hold. He waved his hand to her, while a bright smile illumined his grave face, and she responded by blowing him a kiss from the tips of her taper fingers.

The old Baronet, who had been the first to dismount, looked up as well, and shook his hunting spear at her.

"Ah, rogue!" he called out. "Wait till I catch thee! With never a kiss to spare thy old father!"

Her fresh young laugh rang out gayly as she retorted, "But I have many an one, if you choose, good sir, as surely you wot right well."

"'T is a dear child, — a sweet lass, Jack," the old man said to his youngest son as the two entered the castle side by side. "My heart misgives me at thought of her going to the far-off heathen country, amongst savages and wild beasts; for, alack, who can tell what may befall there?"

Behind them followed Leicester, Sir Walter's eldest son, and beside him was young Will, — in his boyhood a page, and now the heir's special esquire. Walter, the next son, came after them, and then the retainers.

These latter bore the deer slain that afternoon, — a famous buck, with great spreading antlers; and the hounds were close by, sniffing about the carcass with repressed excitement.

The three sons of Sir Walter Devereux were much alike in coloring and stature, being tall and stalwart, with broad shoulders, deep chests, and martial bearing. Their faces were dark, with regular features

and full rounded foreheads, and the narrow, strongly marked eyebrows arched over unusually large dark eyes.

But the eyes of these three young men were totally different in expression. Those of Leicester were apt to glow with over-haughtiness; for albeit proof was not lacking to show that he had done kind deeds and was a loyal friend and subject as well as a valiant soldier, he was feared, rather than liked, by his subordinates.

Walter's eyes bespoke his true nature, — a rollicking one. Indeed an enemy of "Wat" Devereux were a hard matter to find.

But, favorite though he was, his younger brother, John, went far beyond him in this respect. His was a quiet nature, much given to contemplation; one that drew the best from all hearts about him. He had been his mother's idol; and his face was the last her dying eyes sought three years before, as he sat, pale and silent, by her bedside, calmly and prayerfully awaiting her end. He it was to whom the old Baronet always opened his heart, when the elder son's haughty reserve perplexed or hurt him, or Walter's recklessness brought trouble.

Up in the dusking turret room, on the cushions by the open casement, John Devereux now sat, dressed for the evening meal.

Putting his strong arm about Anne, he drew her head to his shoulder, and laughed when she showed him the picture that had so affrighted her, while she confided to him her fears lest some such demon should work evil upon him in that strange land in which they were about to find a new home.

"Nay, sweetheart," he said earnestly, "never would I think to take thee to such perils. There be few, if any, such Indians in the country where we shall abide. These writings treat of long-ago days, when goodly English hearts were few on that shore. 'T is changed now; and albeit somewhat rougher than here in our father's castle, 't is every whit as safe. And think, sweetheart," he added proudly, "we shall be the head of our name in this new land, — the same as our brother Leicester here, in old England."

She clung to him silently, while he stroked her soft hair and bent his handsome head to see her face, now smiling, and looking more reassured.

"Art thou still fearful, little one?" he asked presently.

She lifted her face to look into his eyes, and clasped her arms about his neck.

"Fearful?" she repeated. "Nay, not I, so long as thou art with me."

He drew her head against his breast, and a brooding peace fell upon them, broken only by the cawing of the rooks circling about the tower, or the melancholy notes of the ringdoves ensconced amid the ivy on the ancient turrets.

Across the broad Atlantic, on the rocky shore of Marblehead, the May sun had been shining as golden and warm as in old England; and the new home, although lacking the renown which age and legend had brought to every stone of Bromwich Castle, was enveloped by the glory that comes from the love of pure, brave hearts and God-fearing lives.

Facing the open sea along a portion of the shore of what is now known as Devereux and Clifton, lay the acres — forest and meadow land — of which John Devereux was owner. The house — a low, rambling stone building, of somewhat pretentious size for those days, and fitted with stout oaken doors and shutters — stood in a small clearing.

Only a few yards away were the sheds for cattle, placed thus near for greater protection against thieving Indians, as well as the pilfering pirates who at rare intervals swept along the coast and descended upon the unwary settler, in quest of food or booty.

The virgin forest rose all about, save to the southwest, where the fields were planted to the extent of several acres; and beyond these the forest came again, stretching away to the site of the present town of Marblehead, more than a mile off.

In front of the house was a small open space where the trees had been cut away and the undergrowth removed, that a glimpse might be obtained of the sea; and the land, sloping to the sands, ended in a noble sweep of beach.

A mile or more to the south and southwest, by Forest River, dwelt the Indians, their wigwams not so many as a few years before; for want and pestilence had sadly weakened the once proud Naumkegs.

Their chief, the renowned Nanepashemet, was now dead; and the present ruler, his widow, the "Squaw Sachem," was, like her tribe, too greatly broken by the vicissitudes of fate to resist the encroachments of the whites. And her only surviving son, Weenepau-

weekin, or, as the settlers called him, "George," was either indifferent, or else too wise to risk incurring further trouble for his tribe by assuming other than an amicable attitude toward his white neighbors.

And thus it was that between the settlers and the Naumkegs all was at peace.

The wife of Weenepauweekin, Ahawayet by name, was well known to Anne Devereux and her husband; and both she and her daughter, a girl of seventeen, were frequent visitors at the house of the "English Chief," as John Devereux was called by the Indians.

In her own gentle, coaxing way, Anne had undertaken to instruct Ahawayet in the Christian faith, and hoped to impress also the wayward, wild-eyed daughter, Joane, who would sometimes come from her dignified playing with the children of the "English Chief" to crouch by her mother, and listen to these teachings.

When the news of Sir Walter's death had come across the sea, tears gathered in Anne's eyes as she raised them to those of her sad-faced husband.

"I cannot but think," she said, "on Sir Walter's face, as we saw it fade away while we stood on the ship's deck that morn, with the tears streaming down his cheeks like I never saw them come from a man's eyes before."

"Aye," her husband added, "he was a dear, good father, and a friend as well. God grant that we and them that come after us do naught to bring reproach or sorrow to the name he hath worn, as have so many before him, with pride, and right good dignity."

The sun was sinking fast, and the odor of the forest growths was beginning to mingle with the tang of the sea.

The voices of men and women busy about the cattle and milking were making a cheerful sound of life and bustle from the sheds and outhouses; and on the low-roofed porch in front of the house door, overhung with drooping vines, John Devereux's three sons, Humphrey, John, and Robert, were busy at play.

But they were not too busy to pause now and then to send searching glances into the forest in quest of their father, whom they all united in adoring as the wisest and greatest of created beings.

Humphrey, the eldest, was looking forward proudly to his ninth birthday, now almost at hand, when he was to have the promise fulfilled of being permitted to go along with his father to hunt in the forest, or out on the sea, to fish.

Near them sat their mother, stouter and more matronly than the slender Anne of ten years ago. The aforetime dainty hands were not guiltless of toil stains, and the dark hair was now gathered beneath a snowy mobcap, with only here and there a short, wayward curl stealing out to trail across her brow or touch her pretty ears.

A sudden shout from the boys announced their father's appearance, as he came out of the woods and across the clearing, and with him Noah, the darkey servant, well loaded with game.

"Thou hast had a most successful hunt!" exclaimed Anne, smiling a bright welcome into her husband's

fond eyes, while the children's small hands clung to him, and tiny brown fingers were poked into the mouths of dead rabbits, or tweaked their whiskers to see if they were really dead, or tried to pull open the beaks and eyes of slain birds.

"Aye," was his laughing reply, as he gently freed himself from the little clinging hands; "and I have found more in the forest than game alone, in that I have a most ferocious appetite, — one I trust thou wilt have a plenty to satisfy."

"Give the game to David," said Anne, as a younger and smaller edition of Noah approached, "and come thou within and see, for the supper hath been ready this half hour."

An hour later the children were all safely in Nod-land, and husband and wife were sitting either side the fireplace, where the burning wood was pleasant to feel, for a chill had crept into the air. But the outer door was open, and through it came the hoarse notes of the frogs down in the swampy lands, mingled with the roar of the surf along the near-by shore.

They sat in silence, each content with the other's nearness, as they watched the leaping flames, which made the only light in the room. And this was reflected in a thousand scintillating sparks from the brass fire-dogs that upheld the logs, and in the handles of the shovels and tongs, scrubbed and polished with all the power of arm possessed by Shubar, the Indian wife of old Noah.

Suddenly a lithe, girlish form slipped through the half-open door, coming with a tread as noiseless as

the leaping shadows about the far corners of the room, and Joane, the Squaw Sachem's granddaughter, glided to the hearth and stood between John Devereux and his wife.

So accustomed were they to such things that neither of them was startled, but kindly bade her welcome.

Crouching on the hearth, she turned her dusky face and glittering eyes toward John Devereux, and said quietly and in a low voice, "Strange boat — big boat in harbor, English Chief."

He looked troubled, and Anne glanced at him apprehensively, while Joane continued, now speaking more rapidly, "Gran'mudder sent me tell better keep door shut — better get gun."

"Thou dost mean that the Squaw Sachem sent thee to tell there be danger?" John Devereux asked, half rising from his chair, and looking toward the door. "She thinks they mean evil?"

"Don't know how answer. English Chief talk too fast — ask too many questions all same time. Go slow — then Joane hear right — tell him right." And she smiled up into his face while she touched the slender forefinger of her left hand with the fingers of the right, as if waiting to enumerate his questions.

"Thy grandmother sent thee?"

The girl nodded, and touched a second finger.

"She thinks the men on the ship may do us harm?"

"Say don't like looks — got bad black faces," replied Joane, scowling as though to illustrate her meaning.

"Have any of them come ashore yet?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes — so many," holding up seven brown fingers, "come 'shore. Get water to drink — then go back to ship when sun shines. But no go 'way yet — no mean to go. Tell gran'mudder want somethin' eat. Take our corn, and pay no money."

"Pirates!" John Devereux exclaimed, now starting to his feet, while he looked at his wife, whose face paled.

He hurried across the room, bolted and barred the stout door, and examined the window fastenings, the Indian girl still crouching by the hearth and watching him placidly, as if a pirate raid were a matter of small moment.

But her sparkling eyes, and the heaving bosom agitating the many bead necklaces hanging from throat to waist, betrayed her.

"See thou to the children, sweetheart, and warn the maids," John Devereux said to his wife, as he took down his gun and examined it carefully, "while I go to the men and see that the cattle be safe, and the back of the house made secure."

"Good!" exclaimed Joane, with quick approval. "English Chief no sleep — heap good. Give Joane gun, too."

"Had thou not best return to the wigwam, Joane, and to the Squaw Sachem?" inquired Anne, pausing as she was about to leave the room.

"What go for?" the girl demanded, while her eyes flashed with fierce intensity. "No good go — can fight here — fight good, too. Joane stay and fight

by English Chief and his 'Singing Bird,'" — this being the name given by the Naumkegs to Anne, on account of her musical voice.

Knowing that nothing would turn Joane when once her ideas were fixed, and knowing too that her skill with the bow and gun was equal to that of any warrior, Anne was silent, — grateful indeed for any addition to the slender force at hand for defence.

There were in all but nine men, servants and laborers, — two of them white, and the others either Africans or Indians; but they were all, saving old Noah, young, stalwart, and fearless.

John Devereux posted these men in the outbuildings and sheds, as cattle were generally the spoil sought by the marauders when they visited the coast. And when assigning them their positions, he warned them, should they find themselves in danger of being overpowered, to give a signal and retreat to the house, where a side-door would be opened for their entrance. Then, having left with them a plentiful supply of ammunition, he went within to mount guard over his wife and babies.

He had five guns wherewith to arm his household, without counting his own piece, and every woman in his service was acquainted with their use. Even Anne herself had, under his own tuition, become no mean markswoman.

Within doors he found the women greatly excited, and fluttering about aimlessly; but a few quiet words soon brought order amongst them, and with it a return of their courage. Then, having accomplished this, he went once more through the house, from

the rooms downstairs to the low-ceilinged sleeping apartments above, and satisfied himself that all was secure.

In the nursery he found his wife looking at the little boys, who were lying on two great bags of ticking, stuffed with the feathers of wild geese, and placed on the floor, in lieu of bedsteads.

They were sleeping soundly, oblivious of the alarm about the house; and standing beside his wife, his arm around her waist, John Devereux looked down at them.

On one of the pallets lay Humphrey, his strong young arms outstretched, and his chest — broad for his years, and finely developed — showing white as alabaster where the simple linen garment was rarely buttoned by his impatient fingers.

On the other were the two younger boys; and Robert, the gentlest of the three, with his father's own winsome nature, lay with his head half pillowed against his brother John's shoulder.

"What a blessed thing is childhood, and ignorance of danger!" murmured Anne, looking at her husband.

"Aye," he said softly, as they turned away. "So may we know no fear of dangers that threaten, sweet wife, while we trust to Him who watcheth us, — who 'slumbers not, nor sleeps.'"

And as she had answered him ten years before, so she said to him now, "So long as we be together, I have no fear."

A long and shrill sound now broke the silence. It was the blowing of the conch shell suspended in

front of the outer door; and it announced a visitor seeking admission.

Surprised at this, and alarmed as well, husband and wife hurried to the front room below stairs, where they found Joane still crouched upon the hearth. Her bow, now unslung, lay close at hand, and she was examining with pleased curiosity the clumsy blunderbuss resting across her knees, — one that John, at her earnest request, had intrusted to her.

"No enemy — make heap too much noise," was her sententious remark, as she looked up from her inspection of the weapon.

"Mayhap they but do that to disarm us," John replied, as he went cautiously toward the door.

He knew there was no way, except from the beach, for any one to approach the house unseen by his faithful outposts. And he had reckoned upon no attack coming from that quarter, as there was no sailing breeze. Then, again, the pirates would be more likely to come from the direction of the forest, hoping to effect a greater surprise than if they came from the water.

The wailing cry of the conch shell pierced the air for the second time, to echo again in falling cadences that died away in the woods and over the sea.

Placing his lips to the loophole near the door, John Devereux now demanded to know who was outside.

A nasal, whining voice replied; and although the words were indistinguishable, their sound caused the Indian girl to laugh scornfully.

She said nothing, however, but springing quickly

to her feet, sped to the small opening. Then, before her purpose could be understood, she thrust the muzzle of the blunderbuss through the aperture.

"Hold, Joane!" commanded John, as he caught her arm. "What is't thou wouldst do,—kill, perchance, an innocent man? Put the gun down, child, until I challenge again, and know for a surety who it be. Methinks the voice hath a familiar sound."

Joane obeyed him, still smiling maliciously as she said: "Only want give him heap big scare. Him big 'fraid—him coward."

"'T is Parson Legg!" exclaimed Anne, now recalling the piping voice, and enlightened by Joane's contemptuous words.

Her husband opened the door, and a slim, weazen-faced, bandy-legged little man stepped hastily within, his eyes, small and keen as those of a ferret, blinking from the sudden passing out of darkness into light.

"Good e'en to thee, Parson Legg; thou art late abroad," said Anne, coming forward. She did not smile, nor was there aught of welcome in her voice or manner.

But this lack of cordiality was not felt by the unexpected visitor, for he doffed his steeple-crowned hat, which, like the rest of his apparel, was much the worse for wear, and responded briskly, "Good e'en, Mistress Anne, an' the same to you, neighbor John; I hope the Lord's blessin' is upon all within this abode. Ah, who have ye here?" and he peered down at Joane, who had resumed her place before the fire, her back turned squarely toward Parson Legg as he stood in the centre of the room.

He came closer to her, but for all the notice she vouchsafed of his words or presence she might have been one of the brass fire-dogs upholding the blazing logs.

"'T is the Squaw Sachem's granddaughter, Joane," replied John Devereux, turning from the door, which he had refastened.

"Aye, so it be," said the little man; "one o' the unregenerate heathen, upon whom, if they turn not from their idolatrous ways, shall descend smitings sore from the Lord. Hip an' thigh shall they be smitten, and their places shall know them no more."

"Joane hath no idols, good sir, that I know on," said his host, as he came forward and offered the visitor a seat, and then took one himself by the door. "She seemeth ever ready to heed the words of my good wife, and our babes could not have a more gentle playfellow."

Anne had seated herself near Joane, by the fire; and she looked with no very friendly eyes at the Parson, as she said, "Think you not, good sir, it were better to chide the 'unregenerate heathen,' as you call them, with more gentleness?"

His little eyes narrowed into yet meaner lines as he fixed them upon her face. Then leaning forward to lay a finger upon the gun that again lay across Joane's knees, he answered, "It would seem but poor excuse to prate o' gentleness to one who at unseemly hours and seasons goeth about with death-dealin' weapons, seekin' whom she may devour."

The Indian girl still sat immovable; a statue could not have appeared more bereft of hearing or

speech. But to Anne's face there came a look of fine scorn, which softened however into almost a smile as she glanced at her husband.

"Joane came to warn us of danger," John said quietly. "She tells us there is a strange ship in harbor, and we be now armed to guard against pirates, — for such they promise to be."

Parson Legg sprang to his feet as though stung by a passing insect.

"Pirates!" he repeated, in a shrill cry of alarm. "Pirates, — say ye so? I heard naught o' such matter. I was in the woods hereabout all the afternoon, readin' the psalmody, an' makin' joyful melody unto the Lord, till darkness o'ertook me, an' I bethought myself to make my way to this abode, neighbor John, as peradventure thou an' Mistress Anne, thy wife, would give me food an' shelter in the Lord's name till mornin'."

Parson Legg was only an itinerant preacher, having long striven, but without avail, to be accepted by the colonists as successor to their late beloved pastor, the Reverend Hugh Peters, who had gone to England some years before to act as their agent, and was likely to remain there for some time to come, being now a chaplain in the army of Cromwell.

But Legg was entirely unfitted, both by birth and education, for the position to which he aspired. He was selfish and irritable, with a grasping, worldly nature, despite his outward show of humility and sanctity, and was regarded by the colonists with suspicion and illy concealed dislike, while the Indians held him in positive hatred.

Since the summer day, two years before, when he had come upon Joane in the forest, attired in the manly habiliments of her tribe, — this being only for greater convenience while hunting — and had hurled at her young head anathemas such as fairly smelled of brimstone, it had been open war between the two; and the very sight of one to the other was like that of a plump kitten to a lively terrier.

Anne had by this time set forth a meal upon the table, and notwithstanding his recent fright, Parson Legg's little eyes glistened voraciously as he drew up his chair, while he smacked his thin lips more as would a sturdy yeoman, than like a meek and lowly follower of the creed which crucifies the flesh and its appetites.

John still kept his seat by the door, his keen ears listening intently for any unusual sound without, while Parson Legg crunched away at the venison and corn bread, — doing this with more gusto than was pleasant for either eye or ear.

Anne had left the room, motioning to Joane to follow her, and an intense silence seemed to lie about the house, save as it was broken by the sputtering of the fire upon the hearth and the sound of Parson Legg's gastronomic vocalism, and now and then the subdued murmur of women's voices from one of the rooms in the rear.

A sudden roar of firearms, followed by wild yells and cries without, shattered the peaceful brooding of the place, and caused Parson Legg to spring wildly from his chair.

"The heathen are upon us!" he gasped, his articu-

lation being somewhat impeded by the presence of a huge piece of venison in his mouth. "The heathen are come upon us with riotin' an' slaughter! John — John Devereux, hide me, I beseech thee, — hide me from their vengeance. I am a man o' peace, an' the sight o' bloodshed is somethin' I could ne'er abide."

John paid no attention to the terrified little man, but springing up with an impetuosity that sent his chair flying across the room, stood erect and scowling, his face turned toward the sounds of strife, and his strong fingers gripping his gun.

"Anne — wife — where art thou?" he cried, as the din increased, and more shots were fired.

"Here." And she quietly entered the room, her face pale, but perfectly calm. "The noise hath awakened the little boys, but I have left Shubar with them, and promised to return shortly."

"Where is Joane?" her husband asked quickly.

"With Shubar and the boys."

"Good; for then there be one gun near, to assure the little ones."

He had been nervously fingering the hammer of his own piece, and while speaking he crossed the room and took a position near that side of the house from whence came the sound of firearms.

Anne remained by the hearth, watching him closely, her tightly clenched hands being all that told of the agitation within.

"Are the little ones much affrighted?" he asked.

"No," she said, still in her calm, sweet fashion; "they do not seem to be — that is, not much.

Humphrey begged that he might have a gun, and Robert sat quiet, looking at me with eyes so like your own as he asked, 'Art fearful, mother? Father will ne'er let them hurt us.'"

John Devereux smiled proudly, for the moment forgetting the din about them.

"And John," he asked, — "what said our second son?"

"He seemeth most affrighted of all," she replied. "He wept at first, and hid his face in my gown; but he was calm when I came away. Thou knowest, John, that the lad hath not been well since the fever, last fall."

"Aye, true, — poor little Jack!" the father said. And he now wondered what might have happened outside, for there was a ceasing of the uproar.

He listened intently a moment. "Methinks, sweetheart, I'd best go outside and see what this silence doth mean. Thou 'lt not be fearful if I leave the house awhile?"

She grew still paler, but only shook her head. Then she asked suddenly, "Where be Parson Legg?"

Husband and wife looked about the room, and then at one another.

"He was here when the firing began," said John, finding it difficult not to smile as he recalled the scene.

"But wherever can he have gone?" persisted Anne.

"Hiding somewhere, I warrant me," was her husband's reply. "He is an arrant — "

His words were drowned by the roar of a blunder-

buss, coming apparently from just over their heads, and this was followed a moment later by a wild yell of triumph from outside.

It was from John's men, and he started to open the door. But before he could do this there arose such a clamor in the nursery above that he and Anne, forgetful of all else, sped up the stairway.

Old Shubar's voice came to them raised in shrill cries, echoed by those of the boys, — only that Humphrey and Robert seemed to speak more from indignation than fright.

Wondering what it could all mean, they hurried into the room, where an absurd sight met their alarmed eyes.

In one corner, beside Humphrey's pallet, stood Shubar, still uttering the wild shrieks they had heard, and huddling about her were the three boys, — John clinging to her gown, while Humphrey and Robert, both facing about, were shouting at a strange figure that burrowed frantically into the pallet occupying the opposite corner of the chamber.

"Shubar says 't is a witch," cried Robert. "Take thy gun and slay her before she bring evil upon us."

"Be quiet, my son," said his father, scarcely able to repress his laughter, for at the sound of his voice Parson Legg's weazened face, all blanched by fear, was lifted from out the pillows, and a pair of terror-stricken eyes peered over his shoulder.

He had been lying face downward, partially covered by the bedclothes, under which he was still trying to conceal himself; and his steeple-crowned hat, now a shapeless wreck, was pulled down over

his ears, as if to shut out more effectually the sounds of strife that had well-nigh bereft him of reason.

"It would seem thou canst preach far better, Parson Legg, than defend thyself from the enemy," John Devereux said rather grimly, looking down with unconcealed contempt upon the little coward, while Anne busied herself in reassuring the children and quieting Shubar's angry mutterings.

"Even so, neighbor John, even so," answered the Parson, in no wise disconcerted at the sarcasm of the other's words and tone, and making no movement to emerge from his retreat. "As I told thee below, I am a man o' peace, an' I like not the sound o' war an' the sight o' bloodshed. But what doth this silence portend? — are the enemy routed, — are they vanquished, an' put down, smitten hip an' thigh, an' put to flight by thy brave followers?"

His anxious queries met with no reply, for John Devereux, who was standing upon the threshold of the room, had become conscious of a sharp current of air blowing upon his cheek. It told him that the scuttle was open overhead, and turning about, he darted swiftly up the ladder.

He was soon upon the roof, and here he stood a few moments and looked keenly about.

The voices of his men came to him from the ground below. They had left their concealment, and the lightness of their tones told him that all danger was past.

As his eyes became more accustomed to the gloom, the dim starlight revealed to him the outlines of a form crouching behind the great chimney not far away.

"Joane!" he called softly, suspecting who it might be.

She arose and came to him, and he heard her laughing to herself.

"What camest thou up here for?" he demanded, speaking quite sharply.

"Joane shoot pirate captain," she answered, still laughing. "Heap scare 'em — no know where shot come from — all run away to ship."

And so it proved. The marauders, having received a very different reception from the one they had expected, were utterly discomfited when an unseen enemy — in the person of Joane and her blunderbuss — scattered a mighty charge of slugs and bullets in their midst. Their leader was struck in the arm, and fearing they had fallen into an ambuscade from which it would be difficult to escape, he shouted to his men that he was wounded, and bade them fly to the ship.

This was the last of the raids that had so annoyed the colonists, and thenceforth they were free from such molestation.

John Devereux's days passed on, full of peace and pleasantness, until he died at a ripe old age, respected and loved by all his fellow-townsmen, and mourned deeply by the faithful wife who did not long survive him.

The boys lived to man's estate, were married, and had children of their own. But Humphrey and John died in their father's lifetime; and so it was that Robert, the second son, became the heir.

CHAPTER I

MARBLEHEAD, and July, in the year of our Lord 1774.

In the harbor (now known as Great Bay) the water lay, a smooth, glistening floor of amethystine hue, shut in protectively by the "Neck," thrust out like a strong arm between it and the rougher sea beyond, stretching, purple and endless, to the rim of the cloudless horizon.

To the north and northwest lay the islands, the nearer ones sharply outlined in trees and verdure, but showing here and there a grayness of beach or boulder, like the bald spot among some good man's otherwise plentiful locks.

Looking eastward, Cat Island was closest of all to the mainland, the charred ruins upon it showing sharply in the brilliant afternoon sunshine; and here, amid the desolation, a few of the blackened timbers still remained upright, like arms lifted in protest against the vengeance visited upon the hospital a short time before by the well-meant zeal of the infuriated townsfolk.

In August of the previous year, during an epidemic of smallpox, a meeting was called in the townhouse, and Elbridge Gerry, John Glover, Azor Orne, and Jonathan Glover petitioned that a hospital be built on Cat Island, for the treatment of smallpox patients, or

else that the town permit certain individuals to do this at their own expense.

The town refused to build the hospital, but gave permission to the individuals to construct one, provided the adjoining town of Salem gave its consent; it being also stipulated that the hospital should be so regulated as to shield the inhabitants of Marblehead from any "danger of infection" therefrom.

The necessary approval having been obtained from Salem, preparations were made in September for erecting the hospital.

By this time some of the people of Marblehead had become impressed with the fear that by the establishing of the hospital the dread disease would become a prevailing pest amongst them. Their terror made them unreasonable, and they now fiercely opposed the scheme to which they had once given their consent, and demanded that the work be abandoned; but the proprietors, filled with indignation at what they considered rank injustice, persisted in carrying out their worthy project to completion.

In October the hospital was finished, and placed in charge of an eminent physician from Portsmouth, who had attained a wide reputation for his success in the treatment of smallpox. Several hundred patients came under his care, with gratifying results. But a few had died, and this fact brought about bitter and active hostility from the malcontents. They demanded that the place be abandoned at once; and threats of violence began to be made.

The feeling gained in strength and intensity, until at length the proprietors gave up the contest. And

then, to assure themselves that the hospital should not be reopened, a party of the townspeople, closely disguised, crossed to Cat Island one night in the following January, and left the buildings in flames.

But now these summer weeks found the town excited and tumultuous over still graver matters. The British government had found it impracticable to enforce the duty upon tea, and resorting to subterfuge, adopted a compromise whereby the East India Company, hitherto the greatest losers by the diminution of its exports from Great Britain, was authorized to send its goods to all places free of duty.

Although the tea would now become cheaper for the colonists, they were not deceived by this new ministerial plan. And when the news was received that the East India Company had freighted ships with tea consigned to its colonial agents, meetings were held to devise measures to prevent the sale or unloading of the tea within the province.

The agents, when waited upon by the committee chosen for that purpose in Boston, refused flatly to promise that the tea should not be unloaded or sold by them; and they were forthwith publicly stigmatized as enemies to their country, and resolutions were adopted providing that they, and all such, should be dealt with accordingly.

In December, 1773, the historical "Tea Party" took place in Boston harbor; and in the following spring Governor Hutchinson resigned, and General Thomas Gage was appointed in his stead.

Bill after bill was passed in Parliament and sanctioned by the King, having in view but the single

object of bringing the people of Massachusetts to terms. The quartering of English troops in Boston was made legal. Town meetings were prohibited except by special permission from the Governor. And finally the infamous "Port Bill" was passed, which removed the seat of government to Salem, and closed the port of Boston to commerce.

In July subscriptions were being solicited by order of the town of Marblehead for the relief of the poor of Boston, who were suffering from the operation of the "Port Bill," and all the buildings which could be utilized, even to the town-house, were placed at the disposal of the merchants, for the storage of their goods.

In defiance of Parliament, whose act had practically suppressed all town meetings, the people of Marblehead continued to assemble and express their views, and discuss the grave questions then agitating the entire country. The very air of the sea seemed to murmur of war and the rumors of war; and the hearts of thinking men and women were heavy with forebodings of the struggle they felt to be imminent.

But the little town was lying brooding and peaceful this July afternoon. Its wooded hills to the west sent shadows across the grassy meadows and slopes, rising and falling to meet the sand-beaches, or ending in the headlands of granite that made sightly outlooks from which to scan the sea for threatening ships.

Under the pines that made shadows along the way, a horseman was going leisurely along the road leading to the Fountain Inn.

To his left lay level meadow lands, rising into hills as they neared the inn, the old Burial Hill — the town's God's Acre — being highest of all. To his right, the green fields and marshes stretched unbroken to the sea, save for here and there a clump of bushes and tangled vines, or a thicket of wild roses.

The road before him ended in two branches, one leading to the rising ground on the right, where stood the Fountain Inn, while to the left it terminated in a sandy beach, before which stretched the peaceful waters of Little Harbor, now whitened with the sails of East Indian commerce, and the craft belonging to the fishing fleets that plied their yearly trade to the "Banks" and to Boston.

No large ship could come nigh the shore in Little Harbor; whereas in the deep bay lying between the Neck and the town, the enemy's vessels might anchor by the land itself. And here the townsfolk kept a most active lookout, which left the hills and beaches of Little Harbor almost deserted.

CHAPTER II

THE bridle was lying slack upon the neck of the horse, who picked his way carefully along the road, his hoofs now clicking over the stony highway, now falling noiselessly upon the brown pine needles. And the occasional clatter of his shoes, or the busy chatter of a squirrel high up in a tree, were the only sounds to interrupt the musings of the stalwart rider, whose head was bowed, and whose eyes strayed moodily about.

He was dark and tall, well knit, and of powerful build, yet lithe and graceful. The wandering breeze whipped out stray curling locks about his ears and temples from the mass of dark hair done up in a queue. The broad-brimmed riding-hat was pulled well down over his strongly marked brows, and the smooth-shaven face betrayed the compressed lips of the large but finely formed mouth.

A flash of something white speeding across the road a few yards in front of him caused the dark eyes to open wide, and brought his musings to a sudden end.

Across the marshes to the left he caught a glimpse of twinkling feet, encased in low steel-buckled shoes that seemed to be bearing away from him a fleeting cloud of white drapery.

It was a female, with her so-called "cut" (a dress-skirt so narrow and straight as to make rapid movement very difficult) thrown up over her head and shoulders, as she went over the grass toward the beach at the side of the road facing the Neck.

Recognizing her at once, the horseman called out, "Dorothy!" and spurred his horse out of the road and across the marsh.

As though hearing him, she paused, and without lowering the "cut," turned to look over her shoulder.

The wind, catching her dress, blew the white folds aside, showing a roguish face, and one bearing a strong family resemblance to the man in pursuit. But her features were small and delicate, while his, although not lacking in refinement, were far bolder in strength of outline.

She had the same dark eyes, set far apart under delicate but firmly marked brows, — the same swart curling lashes, and riotous locks.

But here the likeness ceased; for while his face was grave, and full of a set purpose and resolution, hers was almost babyish, and full of witchery, with a peachy bloom coming and going in the rounded cheeks.

She was panting a little from her running, and now stood, waiting for him to speak, her red lips parted in a mocking smile that showed two rows of little teeth, white as the meat of a hazel-nut.

"What mischief have you been up to, you little rogue, and why are you running away from me?" he asked. He spoke with quiet good nature, but looked

down at her with an elder brother's reproof showing in his face.

She did not answer, but only glanced up at him from the sheltering folds of the skirt, billowing about her face like a cloud, while the horse, recognizing a loved playmate, whinnied, and bowed his head to her shoulder as if mutely begging a caress.

"You have been to see Moll Pitcher again," the young man asserted; "and you know our father would be angry that you should do it. And 't is very wrong, Dorothy, in these times, that you should be over in this part of the town alone."

Her brother called her so rarely by her full name that a change from the caressing "Dot" to the solemn-sounding "Dorothy" was a sure mark of his displeasure.

The smile died from her face, and her eyes fell. But she looked mutinous, as she raised a small hand to stroke the horse's nose.

"I did not come alone, Jack," she explained. "Leet rowed me over, and Pashar came with us; and I had little 'Bitha, too."

"An old darkey, who sits dozing in the boat, half a mile away from you, with his twelve-year-old grandson, and little Tabitha! These make a fine protection, truly, had you met with soldiers or other troublesome people," he said, with some sarcasm. "Do you not know there was a new vessel, filled with British soldiers, went into Salem harbor yesterday — and belike they are roaming about the country to-day?" He switched his riding-boot as he spoke,

scowling as though the mention of the matter had awakened vengeful thoughts.

"Hugh Knollys has but just ridden over from Salem; and he said they were all housed there, along with the Governor," the girl said eagerly, glad to find something to say in her defence, as well as to turn the current of her brother's thoughts.

"Hugh Knollys!" he repeated. "Has he been at our house this day?"

"No–o," she answered hesitatingly. "We met him just now as we came out of Moll's. He is at the Fountain Inn."

"We," he said, a smile showing about the corners of his lips. "Are you His Gracious Majesty, Dot, that you speak of yourself as 'We'?"

At the sound of her baby name, all the brightness returned to her face, and glancing up at him, she whispered mischievously, "Look in the thicket behind you."

He turned to send a keen glance into the clump of bushes and vines growing some dozen yards closer to the road he had just left; and there he caught a glimpse of pale blue — like female raiment — showing amid the foliage.

Wheeling his horse quickly, he rode toward it; and what he now saw was a tall, blonde girl of eighteen or thereabouts, who arose slowly from where she had been hiding, and came forward with a dignity that savored of defiance, although there seemed to be a smile lurking in the corners of her mouth.

Her gypsy hat hung by its blue ribbons on one white rounded arm, bared to the elbow, as the fashion

of her sleeve left it. The neck of her pale blue gown was low cut; but a small cape of the same material was over it, — crossed, fichu-wise, on her bosom, and then carried under the arms, to be knotted at the back.

Her round white throat rose out of the sheer blue drapery in fine, strong lines, to support a regal head, crowned with a glory of pale brown hair, now bared to the sun, and glinting as though golden sparkles were caught in its silky meshes.

As she approached, the rider held up his horse, and sat motionless, staring at her, while a merry peal of laughter, silvery as chiming bells, broke from sixteen-year-old Dorothy.

"Mary Broughton!" the young man exclaimed at length, as he looked wonderingly at the fair-haired girl.

She paused a yard away and swept him a mocking courtesy as she said, — and her musical voice was of the quality we are told is "good in woman," — "Aye; at your service, Master John Devereux."

"Then you have been with our madcap here?" he asked, now finding his tongue more readily.

"All the afternoon — an it please you, sir," she replied in the same tone of playful irony.

"It does please me," he said, now with a smile, "for it was much better than had Dot been alone, as I supposed at first. But think you it is safe for you two girls to come wandering over here by yourselves?" And in the look of his dark eyes, in the very tone of his voice, there was something different, — more caressing than had been found even for his small sister, who had now drawn close to them.

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Mary Broughton slipped her arm through Dorothy's, and the mockery left her face.

"I suppose not," she answered frankly. "But, to tell the truth, I had not thought of such a thing until you mentioned it. We 've not met a soul, save Hugh Knollys, who was riding into the inn yard as we came from Moll Pitcher's."

"And so you have been to consult Moll's oracle?" the young man said banteringly.

The white lids fell over the honest blue eyes that had been looking straight up into his own. The girl seemed greatly embarrassed, and her color deepened, while Dorothy only giggled, and slyly pinched the arm upon which her slender fingers were resting.

Mary gave her a quick glance of reproof. Then she raised her eyes and said hesitatingly, "We heard she was down from Lynn, on a visit to her father."

"You girls are bewitched with Moll Pitcher and her prophecies," he exclaimed with a laugh.

"Ah — but she tells such wonderful things," began Dorothy, impetuously. But Mary Broughton laid a small white hand over the red lips and glanced warningly at her companion.

"What did she tell?" the young man asked. But now Dorothy only smiled, and shook her head.

"Come, Dorothy," Mary said, "we had best get back to the boat." And she turned to go; but the younger girl hung back.

"Are you going to a meeting at the inn, Jack?" she inquired, looking at her brother.

"Little girls must not ask questions," he answered, yet smiling at her lovingly. "But do you hasten

to the boat, and get home, Dot, you and Mary. It troubles me that you should be about here. Hurry home, now, — there's a good little girl." But he looked at both of them as he spoke.

"Shall you be home by evening?" his sister asked, keeping her face toward him as she backed away, obliged to move in the direction of the beach; for Mary, still holding her arm, was walking along.

He nodded and smiled; then riding back to the highway, wheeled his horse and stopped to watch the two figures making their hurried way across the marsh. But his eyes rested longest upon one of them, tall and regal, her blonde head showing golden in the waning light, the vivid green of the marshes and the deep purple of the sea making a defining background for the beauty of the woman to whom John Devereux had given his lifelong love.

CHAPTER III

"OH, Mary, there is Johnnie Strings!" exclaimed Dorothy, as they drew near shore, where lay the rowboat, beached on the sand, with Leet, the faithful old darkey, sitting close by, awaiting the pleasure of his adored young mistress.

Near him a little girl of seven was gathering pebbles, her heavy blonde braids touching the tawny sand whenever she stooped in her search. And crouched by his grandfather Leet was the boy Pashar, looking like an animated inkspot upon the brightness all about. His white eyeballs and teeth showed sharply by contrast with their onyx-like settings, as he sat with his thick lips agape, literally drinking in the words of the redoubtable Johnnie Strings, a wiry, sharp-faced little man, whose garments resembled the dry, faded tints of the autumn woods.

Johnnie, with his pedler's pack, stored with a seemingly unlimited variety of wares, was a well-known and welcome visitor to every housewife in town. He lived when at home (which was rarely) in a hut-like abode up among the rocks of Skinner's Head; and the highway between Boston and Glouces-ter was tramped by him many times during the year.

He owned a raw-boned nag of milk-white hue, and rejoicing in the name of Lavinia Amelia; and these

two, with a yellow cur, constituted the entire *ménage* of the Strings household.

Johnnie, like Topsy, must have "just growed," for aught anyone ever knew of a parent Strings. The one item of information possessed by his acquaintances was that his name was not Johnnie Strings at all, but "Stand-fast-on-high Stringer,"—an indication that he must have received his baptism at Puritanical hands.

Either "Stand-fast-on-high" became more unregenerate as his infancy was left behind, or else his associates had no great taste for Biblical terms as applied to every-day use; for his real name had long since become vulgarized to the common earthiness of "Johnnie," and "Stringer" had been reduced to "Strings."

He now sat upon his pack—a smaller one than he usually carried—and was saying to Leet, "Now that there be so cantankerous a lot o' them pesky King's soldiers 'bout us, there's no sayin' what day or night they won't overrun the hull country, from the Governor's house at Salem, clean over here to the sea; an' every man will be wise, that owns cattle, to sleep with one eye an' ear open, an' a gun within reach."

"What are you saying, Johnnie Strings?" called out Dorothy, as she and Mary came up. "Are you trying to frighten old Leet into fits?"

The little pedler sprang to his feet and snatched off his battered wreck of a hat, showing a scant lot of carroty hair, gathered tightly into a rusty black ribbon at the nape of his weather-beaten neck.

"Only sayin' God's truth, sweet mistress," he

answered, bowing and scraping with elaborate politeness. "I've just come from over Salem way; an' yesterday evenin' ye could scarcely see the ground for the red spots that covered it. There were three ship-loads came in yesterday, to add to the ungodly lot o' soldiers already there."

Mary looked troubled, but Dorothy only laughed. And little 'Bitha, abandoning her search for shells and pebbles, pressed closely against her cousin, looking up out of a pair of frightened eyes, blue as forget-me-nots, as she asked, "Does Johnnie say the soldiers are coming after us, Dot?"

Dorothy checked herself in what she was about to say, and bent to reassure the little one, putting an arm about her neck to draw the golden head still closer to her.

"What are they come down from Boston for, Johnnie?" Mary asked; "do you know?"

He cocked his head aslant, and resumed his hat, screwing up one eye in a fashion most impudent in any man but himself, as he looked at her with a cunning leer. Then he said: "There's no harm to come from 'em yet. But soldiers be a lawless lot, if they get turned loose to look after we folk 'bout the coast here, as is like to be the case now. An' so I was just meanin' to hint to ye that 't would be as well to stop nigher home, after this day."

Old Leet, who had listened with a stolid face to all this, was now pushing the boat into the water, while Pashar stood gaping at the pedler, until ordered gruffly by his grandsire to stand ready to hold the craft.

"Have you knowledge that they are coming down here?" inquired Mary, speaking more insistently than before.

"We-l-l, yes, I have," he admitted with a drawl, and was about to add something more, when Dorothy, who had deposited 'Bitha in the boat, and was now getting in to take her own place in the stern, said to him, "Come with us, Johnnie, and we'll take you home, as we pass quite close to your" — hesitating a second — "your house."

"No, thank ye, mistress," he replied, grinning proudly at the dignity she had bestowed upon his humble abode. "I've that will take me up to Dame Chine, at the Fountain Inn, an' I should be there this very minute, an' not chatterin' here. But I was tired, an' when I came along an' saw old Leet, sat down to rest a bit."

"When are you intending to fetch that pink ribbon you promised me weeks ago, and the lace for Aunt Lettice?" demanded Dorothy, as Mary Broughton stepped over the intervening seats, past Leet, at the oars, with small 'Bitha alongside him, and took her place beside her friend.

"I've both in my pack, up at the hut; I'll bring 'em to the house this week, ye may depend on it," answered Johnnie, as Pashar pushed off the boat, springing nimbly in as the keel left the sand.

"If you do not, I'll never buy another thing from you so long as I live," the girl called back, with a wilful toss of her head, as Leet pulled away with strong, rapid strokes.

"'T is all wrong for two pretty ones like them to

be roamin' 'round in such fashion," said Johnnie to himself, as he stooped to take up his pack. Then suddenly, as if remembering something, he turned to the shore and called out, "Shall ye find Master John at home, think ye, Mistress Dorothy?"

Her voice came back silvery clear over the distance of water lying between them. "No; he is up at the Fountain Inn."

"Ah, as I thought," the pedler muttered, with a meaning smile. "I 'll just be in the nick o' time."

"What think you it all means, Mary?" Dorothy asked, the two sitting close together in the boat.

"What *all* means?" echoed Mary, in an absent-minded way, her head turned toward the shore they were leaving, where on the higher land the far-away windows of the Fountain Inn were showing like glimmering stars in the light of the setting sun.

"Why," Dorothy explained, smiling at Mary's abstraction, "all these soldiers coming down here? And Johnnie acts and talks as if he could tell something important, if he chose."

"You know, Dot, we are like to have serious trouble, — perhaps a war with the mother country."

"And all because of a parcel of old tea!" exclaimed Dorothy, with great scorn.

Mary now turned her face in the direction the boat was going, and smiled faintly. "The tea is really what has brought matters to a head," she said. "But there is more in it than that alone, from what I've heard my father say. And there is much about it that we girls cannot rightly understand, or talk about very wisely. Only, I hope there will be no war.

War is such a terrible thing," she added with a shudder, "and you know what Moll told us. I almost wish we had not gone to see her to-day."

"I am not a bit sorry we went," said Dorothy, stoutly. "I am glad. What did she say, — something about a big black cloud full of lightnings and muttering thunder, coming from across the sea, to spread over the land and darken it? Was n't that it?"

"Yes, and much more. Do you think she was asleep as she talked to us, Dot? She looked so strangely, and yet her eyes were wide open all the time."

"Tyntie does the same thing at times. She says it's 'trance.' But Aunt Penine always puts me out of the kitchen when Tyntie gets that way, and so I don't know whether she talks or not. I mean to try and find out, if I can, the next time Tyntie gets into such a state."

"Nothing seems strange for Indians to do or to be," Mary said musingly; "but I never heard of such things amongst white people."

"Oh, yes, you did," Dorothy answered quickly. "Whatever are you thinking of, not to remember about the witches? 'T is said they could foretell to a certainty of future happenings. I wish I 'd lived in those days, although it could not have been pleasant to see folks hanged for such knowledge. As for Moll Pitcher, — I guess she might have been treated as was old Mammie Redd."

CHAPTER IV

THERE was a long silence, broken at last by Mary saying, "Perhaps what some folk say of Moll is true, — that it is an evil gift she has. And yet she has a sweet face and gentle manner."

"I wonder if 't is truth, what they say of old Dimond, her father," said Dorothy, her chin supported in one soft palm, while her eyes looked off over the water, motionless almost as the seaweed growing on the scarred rocks along the shore, left bare by the low tide.

"What is that?" Mary asked.

"Why, that whenever there was a dark, stormy night, with a gale threatening the ships at sea, he would go up on Burial Hill, and beat about amongst the grass, to save the crews from shipwreck."

Mary laughed. "What an idea!" she exclaimed. "How could beating the ground about the dead benefit or protect the living, who are surely in the keeping of Him who makes the tempests?"

"I don't know," was Dorothy's simple answer. "Only that is what I've heard, ever since I was a child. And such talk always took my fancy."

"Well, old Dimond does n't look now as if he could have strength to beat the ground, or anything else. Poor old man, he is very feeble, and I should say 't is a happy thing for him that Moll can come down from Lynn now and then, to attend him."

"Yes," Dorothy assented. Then, with a lively change of tone and manner, "'T was odd, Mary, for her to say that when you left her door you were to see your true-love riding to meet you on horseback."

Mary started, and without answering, turned her head away, while the blood rushed to her lovely face.

"Which was he, sweetheart?" Dorothy persisted teasingly, bending her head so as to bring her smiling face directly under the down-dropped blue eyes, and then laughing outright at the confusion she saw there.

"Which one was it?" she repeated. "You know Hugh Knollys rode down the road directly toward you, and then —"

But Mary's white hand was over the laughing lips and silenced them.

"If your father should hear you talking in such fashion, Dot, I feel sure he would be displeased with me for having gone with you to see Moll." Mary made an effort to look and speak naturally, but her eyes were very bright and her face was still deeply flushed.

Dorothy smiled, and shook her curly head wilfully. "Not he," she said with decision; "leastway, not for long. He is stern enough, at times, to others; but he can never be severe with me."

"Ah, Dot, but you are surely a spoiled child," said Mary, with a fond glance at the winsome face.

Dorothy shrugged her small shoulders. "So Aunt Penine is always saying; but all the aunts in the world could never come 'twixt my father and me."

Little 'Bitha, who had been crooning softly to herself, and improvising, after a fashion of her own, —

> "The sea is blue, blue, blue,
> The sea is blue, and I love the sea,"

suddenly cried out, "Oh, Dot, look, look! What an ugly fish!"

They all looked, and saw a dead dogfish, its cruel teeth showing in the gaping jaws, go bobbing by, entangled in a mesh of floating seaweed.

"Him look like dead nigger," said Pashar, as he flung a pebble at it.

Old Leet scowled over his shoulder at his lively descendant.

"Dere 'll be anudder, an' real true, dead nigger ter keep him company, ef ye don't sit still, an' quit grampussin' 'bout de boat," he growled; and Pashar became very quiet.

They were now drawing in nearer to the shore, where the strip of sand-beach lay down below the rocky headland, upon the highest point of which stood Spray House, the home of Nicholson Broughton and his daughter Mary.

The house — a low, rambling building, with gabled roof — was perched upon the highest of a series of greenstone and syenite ledges, whose natural jaggedness had no need to be strengthened by art to render them a safe bulwark against the encroaching seas, when the storms flashed blinding mists and glittering spray about the diamond-paned windows.

These looked off over the open water, and past the point of land intervening between Great Bay and

Marblehead Rock. Upon the latter was an odd beacon, — being a discarded pulpit from one of the Boston churches, whence, after hearing much of the noise and commotion of men, it had been transferred to this barren rock, there to listen to the ceaseless tumult of the battling sea.

Inland from Spray House stood the many great warehouses; and back of these stretched the pasture-lands, breaking here and there into rough hills, showing fields of golden splendor, where the wood-wax, or "dyer's weed," was growing in luxuriant wildness.

Several small boats were drawn up on the beach; and anchored a little way out, and directly opposite the front windows of Spray House, were two goodly-sized schooners, and a brig, their topmasts now touched by the fiery gold of sunset.

"I wish you were coming home with me, Mary," said Dorothy, as Leet ran the boat's nose into the shingle, and Pashar leaped out to hold the stern.

"I wish so, too. But you know it will not be many days before father goes up to Boston, and he said I should abide with you until he returned."

"That will be fine," said Dorothy, her face aglow with pleasure, as Mary, after dropping a light kiss upon her cheek, arose to leave the boat. "Only, if I were you, I should coax him to let me go to Boston."

"I did ask him; but he goes on public matters, he said, and was like to have a quick and a rough trip." Mary was now standing upon the beach.

"Well, be he gone a long or a short time, we

shall all be very happy to have you with us. That you know, surely." And Dorothy kissed her hand to her friend, as Leet pulled out again into the water and rowed toward the upper end of the bay, while Mary took her way across the beach to the thread-like path leading up to the plateau that formed the back dooryard of Spray House.

In the yard was Joe, the darkey serving-man, busy cutting more wood to increase the already generous pile stored in the building near by, while Agnes, his niece, was in the kitchen, preparing the evening meal.

In the long, low, oak-panelled "living-room" of the house, its windows facing the water, Mary found her father. He was standing — a tall, finely built man, nearly fifty — gazing through an open window. His sturdy legs were well apart, as with hands in his trousers' pockets he was jingling his keys and loose coin in a restless sort of way, while he hummed to himself.

Mary entered so softly, or else his thoughts were so absorbing, that he did not notice her until she stood close beside him and slipped a hand within his arm. Then he started, and the scowl left his brow as he turned the frank, blue-gray eyes, so like her own, down upon her upturned, smiling face.

"Ha, Pigsney!" he exclaimed, now smiling himself. "And have you had a pleasant water-trip?" He looked at her lovingly, while he caressed the blonde head that just reached to his broad shoulder.

"Yes," she replied hurriedly. "And I met Johnnie

Strings, who has but just come from over Salem way. He says there are quantities of soldiers there, and that they are like to come this way and spread all over the town."

"You speak of them, sweetheart, as if they might be another epidemic of smallpox," he said grimly. "And so they are, so they are, if not indeed something worse." And the scowl came back to his face as he looked off over the water at his brig and schooners.

"But what does it all mean, father?" Mary asked anxiously. "Think you they will meet with opposition should they actually come down here? Oh, it would be dreadful to have any fighting right here in our streets and before our very doors." The girl trembled, and her cheeks paled.

"Nay, nay, lass," and he patted her shoulder reassuringly; "cross no bridges until you come to them." Then he added rather impatiently, "What does Johnnie Strings mean by telling such tales to affright women-folk?"

"We — Dorothy Devereux and I — met him, and we made him talk. But he did not seem to want to tell us all he knew about it."

"And quite right," said her father, smiling again. "Lord pity the man who is fool enough to tell women — and girls, at that — all he knows of such matters, in days like these."

Mary looked up at him a little reproachfully, but he only bent and kissed her, as he said, now quite gravely: "I've much on my mind this night, my child, and I have to ask if you can be ready soon

after supper to drive with me to the house of neighbor Devereux, and to stop there a few days with Dorothy. I have certain matters to talk over with him, and will pass the night there; and before daylight I must be on my way to Boston."

CHAPTER V

ON Riverhead Beach, at the extreme southwest end, the Devereux family kept sundry boats, for greater convenience in reaching the town proper, without going around the Neck, by the open seaway; and some distance from the boat-house was their home, the way being along the shore and across the thriftily planted acres and through the woodland.

The same low stone house it was that had withstood the pirates' raid over one hundred years before. But the forests were now gone, although a noble wood still partially environed it. And beyond this were sloping hills and grassy meadows, through which ran a stream of pure, sweet water, wandering on through the dusk of the woods until it found the sea.

Here fed the flocks and herds of Joseph Devereux, the grandson of John and Anne.

There had been some additions to the original building, but these were low and rambling, like the older portion. And before it, broader of expanse and to the vision than in the early days, stretched the sea, a far-reaching floor of glass or foam, to melt away in the pearly dimness of the horizon.

The hush of lingering twilight was over the place, and now and then the note of a thrush or robin thrilled sweet on the golden-tissued air. But from the vine-draped door of the low stone dairy came sounds

less inviting, uttered by Aunt Penine, the widowed sister-in-law and housekeeper of Joseph Devereux, as she goaded her maids at their evening work.

In sharp contrast with her, both as to person and manner, was her invalid sister Lettice, who was sitting on the porch before the open door, with little 'Bitha, her orphaned grandchild, hanging lovingly about her.

Opposite these sat Joseph Devereux, smoking his evening pipe; and crouched on the stone step, her curly head resting against his knee, was Dorothy, now gentle and subdued.

There was an irresistible charm about the girl's wilfulness that blended perfectly with the sacred innocence of her childish nature. She was impetuous, laughter-loving, and somewhat spoiled; but she was possessed of a high spirit, strong courage, and a pure, tender heart.

Her father's idol and chief companion she had always been since, in his sixtieth-odd year, she was laid in his strong arms, — vigorous as those of a man half his own age. And he was looking into her baby face, so like his own, when he heard that she was all he had left of his faithful wife.

He had lost many children; and such sorrow, softening still more a never hard heart, had made him dotingly fond of those left to him, — his twenty-seven-year-old son John and the wilful Dot.

The girl's education had been beyond that of most maids in those times, as had also that of her only friend, Mary Broughton; and for much the same reason. Both girls had been carefully trained by their

fathers; and Aunt Penine, at Nicholson Broughton's request, had taught Mary housewifery in all its branches, at the same time she was undertaking the like portion of her niece's education.

But this was an art in which Mary far exceeded Dot; and Aunt Penine lectured her niece unceasingly, while seeming to find nothing but praise for Mary's efforts.

It was pretty sure to be something of this sort: "Dorothy, Dorothy! Ye'll ne'er be a good buttermaker; ye beat it so, the grain will be broke. Why cannot ye take it this way?" and Aunt Penine would show her. "See how fine Mary does it! Ye have too hot a hand."

Dot would give her head a toss, and remind her aunt that it was not she herself who had the fashioning of her small hand, nor the regulating of its temperature. And then Aunt Penine would be very sure to go to her brother-in-law with complainings of his daughter's disrespectful tongue, and it would end in Dot being persuaded by her father to beg Aunt Penine's pardon, which she would do in a meek tone, but with a suspicious sparkle in her eyes. And after that she was very likely to be found at the stables, saddling her own mare, Brown Bess, for a wild gallop off over the country.

Aunt Penine was one who never seemed to remember that she had ever been young herself; and this made her all the more unbending in her disapproval of Dorothy's flow of spirits, and of the indulgence shown her by her father.

She was now coming across the grass from the

dairy, — a tall, lithe figure, from which all the roundness of youth (had she ever possessed anything so weak) had given way to the spareness of middle age. Her hair, still plentiful, was of a dull, lustreless black; her complexion sallow, with paler cheeks, somewhat fallen in; and she had a pair of small gray eyes that seemed like twinkling lights set either side a very long, sharp nose.

Her gown was now pinned up around her like that of a fishwife; a white cap surmounted her severe head, and her brown arms were bare above the elbows, where she had rolled her sleeves. She well knew that her brother-in-law in no wise approved of her going about in such a fashion; but this was only an added reason for her doing so.

There was a silken rustling of doves' wings, as the flock scattered from in front of her on the grass, where, obedient to Dorothy's call, they had come like a cloud from the dove-cote perched high on a pole near by.

"Joseph," she cried, sending her shrill voice ahead of her as she walked along, "do you know that the last two new Devonshires have either strayed or been stolen?"

"So Trent told me." He spoke very calmly, letting several seconds intervene between question and answer, puffing his pipe meanwhile, while the fingers of one hand rested amongst the curly, fragrant locks lying against his knee.

"Told you! Then why, under the canopy, did n't ye tell *me?*" she demanded, as she now stood on the stone flagging in front of the veranda, her arms

akimbo, while she peered at him with her little twinkling eyes.

He looked at her gravely, and as if thinking, but made no reply.

Her eyes fell, and she seemed embarrassed, for she said in a lower tone, and by way of explanation: "Because, you see, Joseph, I cannot look after the pans o' milk properly, if I know not how many cows there be to draw from. There was less milk by twenty pans, this e'en; and I was suspecting the new maid we 've taken from over Oakum Bay way of making off with it for her own folk, when Pashar came in and said he was to go with Trent, to hunt for the missing Devonshires. And that was the first I 'd heard of any strayed cattle."

"And even had they not been missing, Penine, you had no right to think such evil o' the stranger," Joseph Devereux said reprovingly. "'T is a queer fashion, it seems to me, for a Christian woman to be so ready as you ever seem to be for thinking harsh things o' folk you may happen not to know well. Strangers are no more like to do evil than friends, say I."

He now handed his pipe to Dot, who rapped the ashes out on the ground and returned it to him. He thanked the girl with the same courtesy he would have shown an utter stranger, while Aunt Penine, looking very much subdued, turned about and went back to the dairy.

Joseph Devereux was still a handsome man, with a dark, intellectual face, framed in a halo of silvery hair, worn long, as was the fashion, and con-

fined by a black ribbon. About his throat was wrapped snowy linen lawn, fine as a cobweb, and woven on his own hand-looms by the women of his house, as was also that of the much ruffled shirt showing from the front of a buff waistcoat, gold-buttoned.

The same color was repeated in his top-boots, that came up to meet the breeches of dark cloth, fastened at the knee with steel buckles.

His tall figure was but slightly bowed; and there was a mixture of haughtiness and softness in his manner, very far removed from provincial brusqueness, and belonging rather to the days and surrounding of his ancestors than to the time in which he lived.

John, his son, was a more youthful picture of the father, but with a freer display of temper, — this due, perhaps, to his fewer years. But father and son were known alike for kindly and generous deeds, and as possessing a high ideal of truth and justice.

CHAPTER VI

"DO you suppose, Joseph, that Jack will have had his supper?"

Aunt Lettice asked the question a little anxiously, as she drew about her shoulders the soft shawl that little 'Bitha's impetuous clasping had somewhat disarranged.

"Aye; I think the lad is sure to have taken it at the inn." His voice was very gentle, as it always was when he addressed her.

"There he is!" shouted 'Bitha. And she darted down the steps to wave frantic arms at two horsemen coming up the wooded way to the house, while Dot lifted her head from her father's knee, as he now sat more erect in his chair.

"Have a care, 'Bitha, or we may run you down," called out John Devereux, laughingly. And at this the little maiden made haste to speed back to the porch.

It was Hugh Knollys who accompanied him, — a stalwart, broad-chested young fellow of twenty-five or six, with blunt features and a not over-handsome face. But for all this he had an irresistible magnetism for those who knew him; and no one could ever associate evil or untruth with his frank, keen-glancing gray eyes and clean-cut, smiling lips.

"Good-evening, Hugh, and welcome," said Joseph Devereux, rising to extend a friendly hand as the young man came up the steps.

Hugh removed his hat and nodded to Dorothy, glancing at her askance as she arose and with a demure greeting passed him and went to her brother, who was now giving some orders to old Leet.

"Jack," she whispered imploringly, under cover of the talk going on in the porch, — "Jack, tell me, please, that you will not speak to father of Mary and me seeing Moll Pitcher this afternoon."

He looked at her smilingly, and then took her chin in his fingers and gave her head a gentle shake, in a way he had of doing.

"If I do as you ask, will you promise not to go over to that part of the town again without telling me first, and then not to go unless I say you may?"

"Yes, yes," she answered eagerly.

"Well, then, 't is a bargain." With this he put an arm around her, and they turned toward the house.

"Did Mary go home?" he asked, as they walked slowly along.

"Yes; but she is coming soon to stop with us, as her father is to go to Boston on business of some sort."

"He is like to go this very night," the young man said.

"This very night!" Dorothy echoed. "Why, then, Mary might have come home with me, as I wished. But how do you know that, Jack?"

"Never mind now," was his evasive answer. "You will hear all about it later."

They were now at the porch, and his father, who had been conversing earnestly with young Knollys, said: "Hugh tells me that ye both had supper at the

inn. So come within, Jack, — come, both o' ye, and let us talk over certain matters of importance. Hugh will stop with us for the night; and, Dot, do you go and tell your Aunt Penine, so that his room may be prepared." And leading the way, the old gentleman went inside, followed by his son and their guest.

"Grandame," asked 'Bitha, as Dorothy arose and went in quest of Aunt Penine, "what did Hugh Knollys mean by his talk to Uncle Joseph just now, of the King's soldiers at Salem?" The child spoke in an awed voice, drawing closer to the old lady, and looking up at her with startled eyes.

Aunt Lettice tried to give her delicate features a properly severe cast as she answered, "Hush, 'Bitha! you should not listen to matters not meant for your hearing."

"But I've heard it before, grandame," 'Bitha persisted. "Johnnie Strings said the same thing, this afternoon, to Dot and Mary Broughton. He said the soldiers were coming all over here, clear to the shore, and that we best have guns ready to shoot them."

Aunt Lettice's expression had now become really severe, for she still had the old-time reverence for King and Parliament dwelling in her heart.

"Johnnie Strings is seditious and rebellious, to speak so of His Gracious Majesty's army," she said with marked disapproval; "and he shall sell no more of his wares to me, if he goes about the country talking in such fashion. But you must have mistaken his meaning, child."

But 'Bitha shook her small head wilfully, in a way to remind one of her cousin Dorothy, and took herself

off to the charms of the kitchen regions, where old Tyntie was ever ready to listen to her prattle, and tell her charming tales when work was out of the way.

And this is how 'Bitha came to know that the bright green spots showing here and there in the meadows were the rings made by the dancing feet of the Star-sisters, when they came down in a great ball of light from their home in the sky, striking the ball about as they danced, and causing it to give forth most ravishing music.

And Tyntie told her, also, that the flitting will-o'-the-wisp lights that showed on dark nights over the farthest away marsh-lands were the wandering souls of Indian warriors, watching to keep little children from getting lost or frightened; that the cry of the whippoorwill was the lament of Munomene-Keesis, the Spirit of the Moon, over dead-and-gone warriors vanquished by the white men; that the wild winds coming from the sea were Pawatchecanawas, breathing threatenings for bad men and their ships; and that the frogs hopping about in the cool dusk were all little Iiche, with a magic jewel in their ugly heads.

All this was imparted as they sat out on the great stumps of hewn-down trees, while the twilight gathered and the stars came out in the vault overhead, and the two were at a safe distance from Aunt Penine's practical bustling and sharp tongue.

For Aunt Penine ruled the household with a veritable "rod of iron;" and her courtly and calm-voiced brother-in-law was the only mortal to whom she had ever been known to show deference of manner or speech.

She had gone within, and the maids with her. The dairy was closed for the night, and Dorothy had returned to the porch, where she was now seated in her father's favorite chair.

"Aunt Lettice," she said presently, "what think you all these queer things mean? Mary Broughton said we might have a war; and there seems a great lot for the men folk to be having meetings over, and secret talk about."

"I know no more than you, Dorothy, but I wish it was all over, and that I might have my tea once more; I miss it sadly."

"Why," exclaimed Dorothy, looking greatly surprised, "there is tea in the house, Aunt Lettice! I thought it was not made for you because you did not care for it."

"Indeed I do care for it very much," said the little old lady; and she sighed wistfully. "But Penine said there was to be no more tea, as your father had forbidden it."

"Well, some one is drinking it," Dorothy asserted with positiveness, "for I found a small potful of tea in the store-closet this very morning."

"Are you sure, my dear?" Aunt Lettice asked wonderingly.

"Of course I am sure, for I smelled it; and as I detest the odor, I looked to see what it came from. And I know as well that there is a big canful of tea there, for I caught the lace of my sleeve on the lid last Sabbath day, as I reached to get the sugar to put on 'Bitha's bread. Aunt Penine must know it is there."

"Penine is very fond of her tea." Aunt Lettice sighed again, and this time rather suggestively.

"Well," said Dorothy, her fiery spirit all aglow, "if she be such a pig as to make it for herself when she lets you have none, I shall find out, and tell my father of her doings."

"My dear, my dear, you should not speak so," the gentle old lady protested, but with only feeble remonstrance. It was evident that Dorothy's words had put the matter in a new light.

"Now, Aunt Lettice," continued Dorothy, as she straightened her small figure in the chair, "you know that Aunt Penine often treats you with hard-hearted selfishness, and then next minute she will be reading her good books and trying to look pious. I never want to be her sort of good, — never! And while I live, she shall not treat you so any more. I shall tell father to ask her about the tea, I warrant you."

Before Aunt Lettice could reply to this impetuous speech, a coach drove up, its lamps showing like glow-worms in the gathering dusk. In it were Nicholson Broughton and Mary; and Dorothy rushed down the steps to welcome her friend as though they had been parted for weeks.

While the new-comers were alighting, Leet came up to show the coachman the way to the stables; and then the two girls went directly to the porch, while Broughton himself tarried to give some low-spoken orders to his servant.

The sound of the carriage wheels had brought John Devereux quickly to the porch, while his father and Hugh Knollys followed after, the younger man

walking slowly, in deference to the slight lameness of his host.

"Ah, neighbor Broughton, you are just the man we were wishing for. Heartily welcome!" And Joseph Devereux clasped the other man's hand, while John turned away with his sister and Mary Broughton.

They were joined a moment later by Hugh Knollys; and John Devereux, as though suspecting a possible rival, watched keenly his blunt, honest face as he took the small hand Mary extended. But there was naught in Hugh's look to alarm him, nor in the quiet greeting Mary gave his friend.

Dorothy now drew his attention. "Jack," she asked earnestly, "did you warn Hugh not to speak aught of this afternoon?" But Hugh answered her question by a slight laugh, accompanied by a comprehending nod.

"Oh, Dot," said Mary, with gentle reproach, "you should not deceive your father in this way."

Dorothy raised her head as though she had been struck, and drew herself up to the full limit of her small stature.

"Indeed, Mary, I intend to do no such thing," she replied almost aggressively. "'T is only that I wish to tell him all about it myself, and in my own fashion."

Here her father's voice broke in. "Come, John, — come, Hugh, — come inside, with neighbor Broughton and me. We will get our matters settled as soon as may be, while the girls visit with Aunt Lettice. But ye must all come within; 't is getting

much too damp and cold to stop longer out o' the house."

He drove them in before him and closed the door, shutting out the roar of the surf along the shore, as it mingled with the shrilling of the dry-voiced insects in the grasses and woods.

CHAPTER VII

IT was the dining-room of the house wherein the four men sat in earnest consultation; and now that they were alone, their faces were grave to solemnity.

The oak-ceiled and wainscoted room was filled with lurking shadows in the far corners, where the light from the candles did not penetrate; and the inside shutters of stout oak were closed and bolted over the one great window, along which ran a deep cushioned seat.

Joseph Devereux sat by the mahogany table, whose black polish reflected the lights, mirror-like, and — but more dully — the yellow brass of the candlesticks. His elbow was resting upon the smooth wood, his hand supporting his head; and in the light of the candle burning near, his face looked unusually stern.

His son sat opposite, his face mostly in shadow, as he lay back in his chair and thrummed the table with his slender brown fingers.

At either side sat Nicholson Broughton and Hugh Knollys, the former looking stern and troubled as he smoked his long pipe, while the younger man's face held but little of its usual light-hearted expression. His hands were thrust deep in his breeches' pockets,

and he whistled softly now and then in an absent-minded way.

"Aye, 't is a grave state of affairs, Broughton," Joseph Devereux was saying. "I love not oppression, nor tyrannical dealing. And yet, think you that ever was a petty tyrant overthrown, and the instruments of his punishment could always escape a pricking o' the conscience, that made it not easy for them to look back upon their own share in his downfall? Shall the time come, I wonder, when we must question the truth o' this inspiration we are now acting under as a town and as a country?"

"Nay, say I, — never!" exclaimed Broughton, with fiery ardor. "Being human, we must all feel sympathy for suffering, be it in enemy or friend. But our land is lost, and we nothing better than slaves, did we longer submit to the tyranny of the mother country. As God bade Moses of old lead the children of Israel from the bondage and cruel injustice of Pharaoh, so we should feel that He now bids us, as men with a country, and as fathers with families to cherish and protect, to rise up and assert our manhood, and to assure our freedom, even though it be by as fierce a war as ever was waged."

"And war there 's bound to be!" It was Hugh Knollys who said this, and he seemed to look more cheery at the thought.

Joseph Devereux glanced at him sharply, and then turned to his son.

"You say, Jack," he asked, "that Strings said the Governor was to order a body o' soldiers down to the Neck?"

"Yes, sir — and that right away."

At this, Nicholson Broughton spoke up, looking at his host.

"As I was saying to you awhile back, neighbor Devereux, the committee ordered to Boston, to decide upon delegates, must get a start from town before the redcoats get into quarters upon the Neck, or there may be trouble which it were as well to avoid. This was decided upon when we met at the Fountain Inn, this afternoon; and 't was agreed that all who go from here should take the road to Boston before to-morrow's dawn. John and Hugh, here, reckon on going along with us, to meet Brattle in Boston, for he has sent word that he is to sail the day after to-morrow with a shipload of supplies ordered down by the Governor for the soldiery at Salem. This will be a fine opportunity for smuggling down the firearms and powder which have been hid so long in Boston, waiting the chance for safe conveyance here."

Before Joseph Devereux could speak, his son broke in eagerly: "Hugh and I will come down with Brattle, and we 'll lie off at anchor, as near our own shore as may be. Some one must be ready to give us the signal from the land; and if all is safe, we can put the guns and powder ashore and hide them. This will be the safest plan, for about Great Bay the soldiers will be on the lookout for anything unwonted; and in Little Harbor it will be as bad, for they will have their eyes wide open to keep a sharp watch upon the Fountain Inn, and all about it — be it on land or water."

"You say truly, Jack," his father assented. "But

whom can we trust to give the signal? Ah," with a sigh, "if only I had back a few of my own lost years, or was not so lame!"

"Brains can serve one's land, friend Devereux, as well, oftentimes better, than arms," said Broughton, looking at his host's massive head and intelligent features. "We all have our appointed work to do, and no man is more capable than you of doing his share."

"I pray it may be so," was the reply. "But, be it much or little, all I have and am are at the service of our cause."

"Why not let Dorothy be the one to give the signal?" asked Hugh Knollys, as from a sudden inspiration.

"Just the one," said John Devereux, looking over at his father. "She fears nothing, and can be relied upon in such a matter."

The old gentleman seemed a bit reluctant, and sat silent for a few moments. Then speaking to his son, he said: "Call the child in. This is no time to hold back one's hand from the doing of aught that be needful to help the cause of our land."

It was not many minutes before Dorothy came into the room behind her brother; and her eyes opened wider than ever as their quick glance took in the solemn conclave about the table.

Her father stretched out an inviting hand. "Come here, Dot," he said smilingly. "Do not look so frightened, my baby." And he patted her small hand in a loving way as he drew her close beside him.

"No," added Hugh mischievously, his face having

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now regained its usual jollity, "we are not going to eat you, Dorothy."

She deigned him no reply, not even a glance, but stood silently beside her father, while she looked questioningly into her brother's face.

He explained in a few words the matter in hand; and the flash of her eyes, together with the smile that touched the upturned corners of her mouth, told how greatly to her liking was the duty to which she had been assigned.

Jack had scarce finished speaking, when there was an interruption, in the person of Aunt Penine, who entered bearing a tray, upon which were tumblers and a bowl of steaming punch.

She shot a glance of marked disapproval at Dorothy; then, as she placed the tray upon the table in front of her brother-in-law, she said in a tone of acidity, "Were it not better, think you, Joseph, that the girl went into the other room and stopped with Lettice and Mary Broughton?"

Dorothy turned her eyes defiantly upon the elder woman, her soft brows suggesting the frown that came to her father's face as he said with grave severity: "The child is here, Penine, because I sent for her. Let the punch be as it is — and leave us, please."

She tossed her head belligerently, and without speaking took her departure, casting a far from friendly look at the others.

"I strongly suspect, father," said John, as he rose and crossed the room to close the door his aunt, either by accident or intent, had left ajar, "that we'd best have a care how we let Aunt Penine hear

aught of our affairs. Her sympathies are very sure to be with the other side, if the struggle comes to blows."

"I will see to Penine," his father answered quietly. "Do you go on instructing Dot as to what she is to do."

His son bowed, and turned once more to the girl.

"And so, Dot, as I 've said already, you must reckon surely upon the vessel lying off the beach in a straight line with the Sachem's Cave, on Friday night, at about eleven o'clock. And this being Monday, will give four days, which will be time enough to allow for all that 's to be done. But you must watch, child, even if it prove later in the night, or even in the morning, before we arrive. And when you see a light showing, then disappearing, then two lights, and then three, you must answer from the shore if all be well, and 't is safe to land, by showing two lights, and then letting them burn for us to steer by. Mount as high as you can to the uppermost level above the cave, so that we may get a good view of your signal. Can you keep all this in that small head of yours?" And he smiled at her, as though some happy outing were being planned.

She nodded quickly, but with a grave face; then, after a moment's hesitation, she asked, "May I tell Mary?"

Her brother's eyes dropped, as Hugh Knollys flashed a laughing glance upon him. But her father replied at once: "Aye, it were best to do so. And if neighbor Broughton has no objections, it were more prudent that she should be your companion."

"Not I!" responded Broughton heartily, raising to his lips the glass of punch his host had been dispensing from the bowl in front of him. "But be over-careful, Dorothy, as to who may be about to overhear what you say to her. And" — his voice growing very grave — "may God keep you both, for two brave, right-hearted girls."

"Amen!" said Joseph Devereux. And he lifted his glass to the others, as though pledging them and the great cause they all had so devoutly at heart.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN Dorothy left the dining-room, it was by a door opposite that by which Aunt Penine had made her angry exit, — one leading to the store-rooms and kitchen.

The one through which Dorothy went opened directly upon a small platform, whose flight of three steps descended into the main hall, which was part of the original building, and was now lighted dimly by a ship's lantern swinging from the low dark-wood ceiling, or "planchement."

A pair of handsome antlers were fixed against the wall about midway down the passage, and underneath these was a long mahogany table, piled with a miscellaneous collection of whips, hats, and riding-gloves.

Directly opposite hung the family arms, placed there more than a hundred years before by the hands of John Devereux, the "Emigrant," as he was called. They were: Argent, a Tess and three Tootcauxes, in Chief Gules. Crest, — issuing out of a Coronet, a Talbot's Head. And the motto was "Basis Virtutum Constantia."

Other than this the long, wide hall was bare of furnishing.

Dorothy came out with her usual impetuous rush, and closing the door quickly behind her, was startled by seeing a form rise, as it seemed, from the platform,

and then, as if retreating hastily, stumble and fall down the steps.

The girl looked with astonishment, and saw Aunt Penine prostrate upon the floor of the hall, her upturned face pale and distorted, as with pain.

It was quite evident that she had been eavesdropping; and Dorothy remained at the head of the steps regarding her scornfully for a moment, before asking if she were hurt.

"Yes, I have done somewhat to my ankle, drat it!" gasped the sufferer, but in a low voice, as if fearful of attracting the attention of those on the other side of the door.

"Shall I call Jack?" Dorothy inquired, a faint smile of sarcasm touching her lips; and she made a movement as though to reopen the door.

"No, no,—oh no!" exclaimed Aunt Penine in great alarm, as she endeavored to regain her feet.

This she at length succeeded in doing, and stood with one hand against the wall, while she groaned, but in a suppressed way.

Just then Mary Broughton came from a room farther down the hall, where she had been delighting Aunt Lettice with soft melodies drawn from the spinet, upon which both she and Dorothy were skilful performers.

"What is it—is anything amiss?" she asked quickly, coming up to Aunt Penine, and laying a hand on her trembling shoulder.

But Aunt Penine only continued to groan dismally, while her niece, with a laugh she did not try to hide, now came down the steps.

"Aunt Penine was evidently anxious to be of my father's council," she said to Mary; "and I chanced to open the door too quickly for her, so that she slipped down the steps and has twisted her ankle."

Her aunt straightened herself and glanced angrily at the girl, who only laughed again, while Mary Broughton stood regarding her with a puzzled look.

"Shall I help you to your room, Aunt Penine?" Dorothy asked with elaborate politeness, holding out her arm.

"No," snapped her aunt. "I wish no assistance from you, whose sharp tongue seems ever ready with insult for your elders. Mary will help me; and ye may find Tyntie, and send her to my room." With this she hobbled away, leaning heavily upon Mary, who looked back reproachfully at Dorothy.

But Dot only laughed again, as she turned and went to a door at the end of the hall which communicated with a side passage leading to the servants' quarters; then, having summoned Tyntie, she came back and seated herself upon a lower step of the main staircase to await Mary's coming.

Her friend's first words were full of reproof. "Oh, Dot, how could you seem so heartless?" she said. "You should see Aunt Penine's foot; 't is swollen fearfully, and her ankle is discolored."

"If you but knew how it came about, Mary, perhaps you 'd be less ready to scold me," Dorothy replied, making room on the step. "There are weighty matters being talked of in the dining-room yonder, and I was to tell you what Jack took me in for. Aunt Penine came in with the punch while I

was there, and she tried to have me sent away. She was angry that father would not do this, but bade her mind her business and let me alone. When I opened the door just now, she was trying to listen to what they were saying, and I came out so suddenly as to frighten her, so that she stumbled and hurt herself. I am sorry she is hurt; but if it had befallen me, she 'd have been ready enough to say I 'd but received my just deserts."

"Why should she try to listen at the door?" asked Mary with surprise, as she twisted one of Dorothy's short curls about her slender fingers. But Dorothy gave her head an unruly toss, to release the curl, as she had ever a dislike for being fondled or touched in any way, unless it were by her father or brother.

"There is really to be a war, and that soon," she replied. "The soldiers, they say, are coming down to the Neck in a few days — perhaps even to-morrow; and the people propose — and rightly, too — to fight them, if needs be, should they try to interfere with our doings. Aunt Penine sides with the English, I take it from what I 've heard her say; and I know for a surety she has been slyly making tea to drink, for all that father has forbidden it. He and Aunt Lettice miss their tea as much as ever she does herself, and yet they have never touched a drop. I intend to tell him to-morrow that I know of a canful of tea in the store-closet. I was talking with Aunt Lettice about it when you came this evening. She supposed there was not a grain of it in the house, and I am sure father has been thinking the same. Aunt Penine is deceitful and disloyal to

him — and so I shall tell him, if I live, to-morrow morning."

"Whatever did she expect to hear, that she did so mean and dishonorable a thing as to listen at the keyhole?" Mary spoke musingly, a fine scorn now touching her lips, and it was clear that her sympathy for the afflicted one was greatly dampened.

"Perhaps she intends to play spy, as she disapproves so entirely of the feeling the townsfolk all have. Spies are well paid, so I've heard; and Aunt Penine would do anything for money." Dorothy's eyes flashed, and she stared straight ahead, pulling at her front locks in an absent-minded way, as though she were speculating over all the mischief her aunt might have in view.

"She may mean nothing, after all, Dot," Mary said, after a moment's thought. "It may be that she was only curious to know why you were admitted to the room, while she and all the rest of us were kept out. Still, if I were you, I'd tell my father of her listening."

"Indeed I shall," was the emphatic reply, "and of the tea as well. I have a notion she got it all from Robert Jameson. You know what they tell of him; and he and Aunt Penine seem to have a deal to say to one another these days. She has sent Pashar to him with notes ever so many times, as I know; and Pashar seems to have more silver nowadays than father gives him, for he has, more than once, brought 'Bitha sweets from the store."

Mary nodded significantly at the mention of Robert Jameson's name. He was the nearest neighbor of

Joseph Devereux, and had come to be regarded with distrust — enmity, indeed — by most of his former associates.

He was a widower of some wealth, and had no family; and Aunt Penine had long been suspected of cherishing a desire to entrap him into a second matrimony.

A few months before, an exceedingly complimentary, almost fulsome, address to Hutchinson, the recent Governor, had appeared in the columns of a newspaper known as the "Essex Gazette," to which were attached the names of some residents of the town, Jameson's amongst them. It endorsed all that had been said in praise of his administration, and of his aiming only at the public good; and it asserted that such was the opinion of all thinking and dispassionate citizens.

This manifest untruth had raised a storm of indignation. A town meeting was held, and a committee appointed, with instructions to inform the signers of this false and malicious statement that they would be exonerated only by making a public retraction of all sentiments contained therein; and that upon refusing to do this, they would be denounced as enemies of the province, desiring to insult both branches of the legislature, and to affront the town.

Jameson had been one of the few who refused to comply with the committee's demand; and he had since been shunned as an enemy to the cause, and looked upon with suspicion and distrust.

CHAPTER IX

THE household was astir early the next morning to set the travellers on their road with a warm meal and a parting word; and despite the absence of Aunt Penine, all the domestic machinery moved as smoothly as usual.

There could still be seen a few stars, not yet blotted out by the pearly haze, shot with palest blue, that the dawn was putting in front of them.

Over the sea hung a curtain-like gathering of fog, and the air was heavy with the odors from the wood and fern, brought forth by the damp.

Nicholson Broughton, having borrowed a saddle from his host, had decided to pursue the remainder of his journey on horseback; and he, with his two younger companions, was now about to set forth.

Mary stood near her father's horse, while he gave her some parting words of encouragement.

"Now bear in mind, Pigsney, all I have said, and never fail to keep a watchful eye and stout heart. All at the house will go well until my return; and do you abide here, safe and close, with our good friends. Be sure to keep away from the town, and whether the Britishers come to the Neck or no, you will be safe."

She promised all this, and turned away as he rode off, waving a farewell to his host, who stood within

the porch, with Aunt Lettice and little 'Bitha alongside him.

Hugh Knollys followed, with a gay good-by to all, while John Devereux, who had been talking with Dorothy, now vaulted into his saddle.

As he was about to start, Mary Broughton passed along in her slow walk to the house. She turned, and their eyes met in a look that told of a mutual understanding. But she flushed a little, while he only smiled, doffing his hat as he rode slowly past her down the driveway.

Dorothy was waiting, close to her father, on the porch.

"Don't you wish you were a man, Mary," she said, as her friend came up the steps, "so that you could ride away to do battle for our rights, instead of being only a woman, to stop at home and wonder and worry over matters, while the baking and churning must be done day after day?"

Her father smiled at this, and pinched Dorothy's cheek; then a sadness came to his face as he looked at her.

"To be a woman does not always mean the doing of over-much baking or housework," said Mary, with a meaning smile, her cheeks fresher and her blue eyes brighter, like the flowers, from the pure morning air.

Joseph Devereux nodded an assent. "If you and Mary," he said to Dorothy, "were to ride to Boston this day, who would there be to do what you are entrusted with the doing on? Mark ye, my daughter," and he bent a grave look upon her bright face, "women, as well as men, have high and holy

duties to perform, — aye, indeed, some of them even higher. Where would come the nerve and hope for the proper ambition o' men's minds, were there no mothers and wives and — sweethearts, to make their lives worth the living, and their homes worth fighting for, — yes, and their country so much more worth saving from oppression. Nay, my baby, what would become o' your old father, if he had not a little maid to console him, when his only son must needs face risks and dangers?"

Dorothy did not answer, but her face softened, and her arm stole up about his neck.

"Dot," said Mary, presently, "do not forget the matter we talked of last evening, — that your father was to know."

"And pray, what is that?" the old gentleman asked briskly.

"Come into the library, father, with Mary and me, and we will tell you." And slipping her hand around his arm, she started to lead him in. Mary was about to follow, when he turned to her and held out his other arm. With an answering smile she placed her hand within it, and all three went inside.

Aunt Lettice had gone off to her own apartments, taking 'Bitha for her usual morning instructing, and so they were not likely to be disturbed.

As soon as her father was seated, Dorothy, standing by the window, burst forth with her accustomed vehemence.

"I want to tell you, father," she exclaimed, "that I am sure Aunt Penine is a loyalist!"

"Chut, chut!" he replied reprovingly. But he

smiled, used as he was to the differences betwixt his daughter and her exacting relative.

"I have good reason for what I say," Dorothy insisted; "and Mary can tell you so, as well."

"Well, child, first tell me all about it, and do not begin by misnaming any one," her father said gently.

She told him in a few rapid words, — first, what had happened the evening before, and ending by a detailed account of finding the tea in the store-closet.

Her father was scowling ominously by the time the story was finished; and he sat in silence for a few moments, his head bent, as though considering what she had told him. Then he said: "I thank you, my child, for what you have told me. I must speak with Penine o' these matters, and that right away. Do you go, Dot, and tell her I wish to talk with her, and must do so as soon as she can see me in her room."

"Why not let Mary go?" Dorothy suggested. "Aunt Penine likes Mary, and she does not like me — nor I her." And she looked quite belligerent.

"I will be glad to go, if you say so," Mary offered, rising from her chair.

"Well, well," he said, "it matters little to me who goes; only I must see her at once. And thank you, Mary, child, if you will kindly tell her so."

As soon as Mary left the room, Dorothy came over to her father's chair and perched herself upon one of its oaken arms.

"And now there is another thing I wish to tell you," she said, "and I'd best do it now."

He put an arm about her and smiled up into her troubled face.

"Well, well," he said playfully, while he smoothed her curls, "what a wise little head it has grown to be all on a sudden! We shall be hearing soon that Mistress Dorothy Devereux has been invited by the great men o' the town — Lee and Orne and Gerry, and the rest o' them — to be present at their next meeting, and instruct them on matters they wot not on, despite their age and wisdom."

She would not smile at his badinage, but went on soberly to warn him of what she suspected between her Aunt Penine and their ostracized neighbor, Jameson, — telling him also of the unusual amount of coin being spent by the boy, Pashar, whom she had seen carrying notes for her aunt.

The smile left her father's face as he listened to this, and he shook his head gravely. And when she finished, he said, as though to himself, "'T is the enemies in one's own household that are ever the most dangerous." Then rising, he added, "Come with me, Dot, while I speak first to Tyntie."

The old Indian woman had been devoted to the interests of the family since forty years before, when Joseph Devereux found her — a beaten, half-starved child of ten — living with her drunken father in a wretched hut on the outskirts of the town, and brought her to his own house for his wife to rear and instruct. And because of her idolatrous love for her benefactor and his family, she had endured patiently the exacting tyranny of Aunt Penine, whom she detested.

Her tall, spare figure was now moving about her domain with a curious dignity inseparable from her

Indian birth; but she paused in what she was doing the moment her master and his daughter appeared at the door, and remained facing them in respectful silence.

She was alone, the men having gone off to their duties about the farm, and the maids to the dairy, or to the housework above stairs.

"I desire to ask you, Tyntie," her master began, addressing her with the same grave courtesy he would have used in speaking to the best-born lady in the land, "if, since I forbade the making or using o' tea in my house, any has been brewed?"

"Yes, master," she answered without any hesitancy; and a sly look, as of revenge, crept into her black eyes.

"How dared ye do such a thing?" he demanded, his face severe with indignation.

"I never did it," was her laconic reply.

"Then who did? I command ye to make a clean breast o' the matter." And he struck his stick peremptorily upon the floor, while Dorothy, awed by the unusual anger showing in his voice and bearing, drew a little away from him.

"It was Mistress Penine brewed the tea, for her own drinking." And Tyntie showed actual pleasure in being thus enabled to expose her oppressor.

"And how often hath this happened since I gave strict orders that none should be had or drunk in this house o' mine?"

"'Most every day; and sometimes more than once in the day."

"And how were you guarding your master's in-

terests, to permit such secret goings on under his roof, without giving him warning?"

The tears rose to Tyntie's eyes and stood sparkling there; but her voice was firm as she replied, "It was not for me to know that Mistress Penine was doing anything wrongful, nor for me, a servant, to come to you, my master, with evil reports o' your own kinsfolk."

She spoke slowly and with calm dignity, and her words softened the white wrath from the old man's face.

He bent his head for a moment, as though pondering deeply; then he looked at her and said in a very different tone: "You are a right-minded, faithful servant, Tyntie, and I must tell you I am sorry to have spoken as I did a moment agone. But from this day henceforth, bear in mind that should you ever see aught being done under my roof that you've heard me forbid, 't is your bounden duty to come and inform me freely o' such matter."

"Yes, master." Tyntie now wiped her eyes, and looked very much comforted.

"Now," he asked, his voice growing stern once more, "know you where aught o' the forbidden stuff be kept, or if there still be any in the house?"

Tyntie went silently to the store-closet and fetched a sizable can of burnished copper. This she opened and held toward her master and young mistress, who saw that it was nearly half filled with the prohibited tea.

Joseph Devereux scowled fiercely as he beheld this tangible evidence of Penine's bad faith and selfishness.

"Do you take that in your own hands, Tyntie, as soon as may be," he said; "or no — take it this instant, down to the beach, and throw it, can and all, into the water. And see to it that you make mention o' this matter to no one."

Then turning slowly, he took his way again to the front of the house, Dorothy following in silence, and feeling unwontedly awed by the apprehension of the storm she felt was about to break; for it was a rare matter indeed for Aunt Penine to be the one entirely at fault in anything.

CHAPTER X

DOROTHY saw Mary Broughton on the porch outside and was about to join her, when Mary turned and called out, "Aunt Penine is waiting to see your father."

At this Dorothy retraced her steps to the library, where she had left her father sitting in moody silence, tracing with his stick invisible writings upon the floor, the iron ferule making angry clickings against the oaken polish.

He made no reply to the message she gave him; so, after pausing a moment, she said again that her aunt was awaiting him.

"Yes, yes, child; I hear ye," he replied almost impatiently, and as though not wishing to be disturbed.

Dorothy said nothing more, but went out and joined Mary, who was waiting on the porch; and, arm in arm, they strolled out into the sunshiny morning.

They had gone but a little way when Dorothy's sharp eyes spied Pashar coming from a side door of the house. His black hand held something white, which he was thrusting into the pocket of his jacket.

She called to him sharply, and he turned his head in her direction, while his eyes rolled restlessly. But he made no movement to come to her, and stood motionless, as though awaiting her orders.

"Come here!" she called peremptorily; but still he hesitated.

"Do you come here this instant, Pashar, as I bid you," she commanded, now taking a few steps toward him.

At this he came forward, but in a halting way, and at length stood before her, looking very ill at ease.

"Give me that letter," Dorothy demanded, extending her hand for it.

"Mist'ess Penine done say — " he began in a hesitating, remonstrative fashion; but Dorothy cut him short.

"Give me that letter," she repeated, stamping her small foot, "or you 'll be sorry!"

Trained like a dumb beast to obedience, the negro boy fumbled in his pocket and took out a folded paper which he handed to his imperious young mistress.

"What 'll I say ter Massa Jameson when I sees him?" he asked tremblingly, as Dorothy's little white fingers closed over the letter. "He 'll lay his ridin'-whip 'bout my shoulders, if I goes ter him now."

"My father will surely lay *his* riding-whip about your shoulders, if you go near Jameson again. I'll see to it myself that you get whipped, if you dare do such a thing," exclaimed Dorothy; and the angry flashing of her dark eyes bore witness to her sincerity.

"Now," she added, "go about your work, — whatever you have to do. And mind, don't you dare stir a step — no matter who bids you — to Jameson's place; else you will get into trouble that will make you wish you had obeyed me."

With this she turned back with Mary in the direction of the house.

"Ye won't have me whipped, will ye, mist'ess?" Pashar whimpered, as he looked after her. "Mist'ess Penine — she tole me I was ter go. An', 'sides, I gets money from Massa Jameson for ev'ry letter I fetches him."

"I 'll see presently about your getting whipped," was Dorothy's uncomforting reply, as she glanced over her shoulder at the trembling boy.

The two girls walked quickly toward the house, while Pashar betook himself off with a very downcast air, digging his black fists into his eyes as if he felt only too certain of being punished for his wrong-doing.

Joseph Devereux was ascending the stairway, bound for his sister-in-law's room, when the two girls came in from outside. Dorothy called quickly, and speeding after him, placed the letter in his hand, as he paused and turned to face her.

In a low voice she acquainted him with what she had taken upon herself to do, adding, "I was fearful of what she might have told him, if perchance she overheard anything last night of the gunpowder and arms."

"Wise, trusty little maid," he said, a slow smile touching the gloom of his set face. "You have acted rightly and with great discretion, Dot. And now I will see what Penine has to say o' the matters that look so grave, as we see them."

Pausing at her closed door, on the left-hand side of the upper passage, he knocked, and then entered, as

her querulous voice, now somewhat subdued, bade him.

Penine was lying back on a settle, a bright-hued patchwork of silk thrown over her spare form; and her eyes showed traces of recent tears.

Her brother-in-law seated himself in an arm-chair near her, his face grave to sternness, as he bent a piercing look upon her troubled face.

She cast a furtive glance at the paper he still held in his hand; then her eyes fell, and she began to pluck nervously at the edge of the covering, while her face became filled with an expression of guilty embarrassment.

"Penine," he began, in a voice quite low, but full of severity, "these be times when, as you well know, it behooves a householder to look most carefully to the doings of those about him. He must see to it that all appearance, as well as doing, o' wrong be most strictly avoided. And so I have come to ask you, as one o' my own household, how is it that you have been brewing tea for yourself, after all that's been done and said; and how 't is that you have such a supply of the stuff in my house?"

Penine flushed angrily, and tried to look him in the eyes, while her lips half parted, as though to make some retort. Then she seemed to alter her mind, for she remained silent, her eyes falling guiltily before his stern, searching gaze.

"Do not seek to hide your fault by another one — o' falsehood," he warned her, more sternly than before. "I know what I am accusing you of to be the truth, — more 's the pity. And it surprises and grieves

me that a woman o' such years as you should set a pernicious example to those who, younger and inferior in station to yourself, look to you for a proper code of action for their following."

"What harm is it, I would like to know," she burst out, but weakly, "that I should drink my tea, if I like?"

"The harm you do is to defy your country's law, and make me seem disloyal and false to my word of honor," he replied with increasing sternness. "And this you have no right to do, while you abide under my roof."

"My country's law is the law of His Gracious Majesty," she answered, plucking up a little spirit, but yet unable to meet his dark, angry eyes, "and I have never heard that he forbade his loyal subjects all the tea they could pay for and drink."

"Do ye mean me to understand that ye set yourself up as the enemy o' your townsfolk and kindred?" he demanded, his voice rising. "I've suspected as much since I had knowledge o' the fact o' your sending notes to Robert Jameson."

"You have no right to talk to me so, Joseph," she said, with a whimper, terrified at the angry lighting of his face, now ablaze with wrath.

"And ye have no right to act in a manner that makes it possible for me to presume to. If things be not so black against ye as they surely look, take this note that ye sent my servant with just now, to be delivered to our country's avowed enemy, and read every word aloud to me."

He held the letter toward her; but she made such

an eager clutch for it that a sudden impulse led him to change his mind, and he drew back his hand.

"No," he said, "on second thought, 't is best that ye give me permit to read it myself, aloud."

"No, no!" she exclaimed almost breathlessly; and the unmistakable terror in her voice and eyes confirmed him in his determination to see for himself the contents of the letter.

"I have to beg your pardon, Penine," he said with formal courtesy, "for seeming to do a most ungallant act; but your manner only proves to me what is my duty."

With this he deliberately broke the seal and ran his eyes over the paper, while Penine cast one terrified glance at him, and then fell back, silent and cowering, her ashy face covered by her trembling hands.

She had written Jameson of the intended landing of the arms and powder. And Joseph Devereux knew she had done so with a view to having him send word of the matter to the Governor, hoping in this way to win honor and reward for the man she expected to lure into speedy wedlock.

He read the letter once more, and then sat silent, as though pondering over all her selfish treachery and disloyalty. And while he was thus musing, the clock on the mantel ticked with painful loudness, and some flies crawling about the panes of the closed windows buzzed angrily.

When at length he spoke, his wrath seemed to have given place to pity, mingled with utter contempt.

"I can scarce credit, Penine," he said slowly, all trace of anger gone from his voice, "that you should have realized to the full all you were doing when you took such a step, — that you were bringing the British guns down to slay my son, an' like as not my innocent little maid; a fate which now, thank God, has been kept from them."

His voice had become husky, and he paused to clear his throat. Then he resumed, speaking in the same deliberate manner: "Because o' their deliverance from death I will try and forgive what you have tried to do; but I must not forget it, lest another such thing befall. And now, until you be able to travel, you shall be made comfortable here. But so soon as your ankle can be used, then you shall go to your brother, in Lynn, for no roof o' mine shall harbor secret enemies to my country. And," now with more sternness, "I warn you, that should you seek to hold converse or communication of any sort with this man Jameson while you are in my house, I shall report the matter to the town committee, and leave them to settle with you."

He arose from his chair, and without another glance in her direction went out of the room, leaving Penine in tears.

CHAPTER XI

THE days intervening until Friday passed without event, and the household affairs went on much as before, Tyntie proving herself fully capable of replacing Aunt Penine as head of the domestic régime.

That lady kept her room, seeing no one except Tyntie and one of the younger maids. She had refused all overtures extended by her niece and Mary Broughton; and so, by the advice of the head of the house, they left her to herself.

Even Aunt Lettice was refused admittance by her sister, and refrained from seeking it a second time after being informed by Joseph Devereux of the recent occurrences.

The gentle old lady now went about the house in a sad, subdued fashion, secretly debating as to whether she would decide against King or Colony, but carefully keeping her thoughts from being known to others.

Johnnie Strings had kept his word to Dorothy, and brought the ribbon and lace. Aunt Lettice had paid him for the goods she purchased, making no response when he said, as he strapped his pack, "The Britishers be quartered on the Neck, ma'am, — landed there this very mornin'. The reg'lars, — they came down

by ships from Salem; an' a troop o' dragoons be ridin' over to join 'em."

It was Mary Broughton who asked, "What are they come there for, Johnnie, — do you know?"

"Any one can guess, mistress, I take it," he replied significantly, busying himself with the buckles.

"And what do you guess, Johnnie?" asked Dorothy, who was examining a sampler 'Bitha was working, which was to announce, —

> "Tabitha Hollis is my name,
> New England is my nation,
> Marblehead is my dwelling-place,
> And Christ is my Salvation."

Johnnie Strings finished his work with the straps and buckles; then raising himself from the floor, he said jocosely: "Now, Mistress Dorothy, surely ye don't care to burden your mind with matters o' state. Whatever they be come down for, 't is a true fact that the redcoats be on the Neck, — a hundred or more of 'em. An' as I was tellin' ye but t' other day, ye 'd best keep at home till they be called away again."

This was Thursday; and Friday morning the two girls, with 'Bitha, were down in the Sachem's Cave, a small opening that ran, chasm-like, into the rocks a few feet above the level of the sea, with a natural roof projecting over it.

Within was a sandy floor, — whether or not the work of man, none living could say. It was studded with shells, placed there by childish hands, and the cave had served as playhouse for many generations of boys and girls.

The opening was hung about with a lace-like weed, wherein some drops of water were now sparkling in the morning sunshine; and beyond, stretching away to the horizon, could be seen the sea.

The waves creeping in against the shore broke with gentle plashings as they touched the rocky base of the headlands; a wonderful serenity lay over the face of the earth, and all between the land and horizon seemed a blank and dreaming space of water.

"We are sure to have a fine night," Dorothy had just said, as she looked out at the sea and sky.

"H-m-m," murmured Mary, warningly, and with a quick glance at 'Bitha, who seemed to be poring intently over a small book she had taken from her pocket.

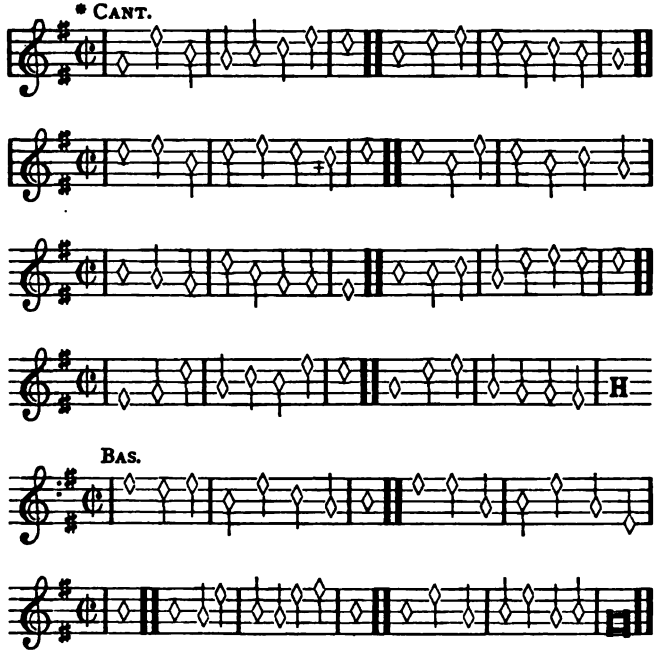
"What are you reading, 'Bitha?" Dorothy asked; and the little girl came close beside her.

It was Aunt Lettice's "Church Book;" and on the titlepage was: —

"A NEW VERSION OF
the
PSALMS
of
DAVID,
fitted to the Tunes uſed in the Churches:
With ſeveral Hymns
Out of the
Old and New Teſtaments.
By John Barnard,
Paſtor of a Church in Marblehead."

In the back part of the book was the music of several tunes such as were used at that time in the churches; and amongst them was one known as

"Marblehead."



Good Parson Barnard had years since been laid away in his grave on the old Burial Hill, which rose higher than all the land about, as though Nature were seeking to lift as near as might be to the skies the dead committed to her care.

* Copied literally from publication "printed by J. Draper for T. Leverett in Cornhill 1752."

The quaint child seemed to delight in pondering over these hymns, many of which were past her comprehending; and the long s, so like an f, led her to make many curious blunders when trying to repeat the words, — a thing she was always proud to be asked to do.

Once she had insisted upon being told why it was that saints must have "fits;" and it appeared that she had misread the long s in the sentence, "The Saints that ſit above."

Her greatest favorite, and the one she often read, was: —

"My Heart, like Graſs that 's ſmit with heat
Withers, that I forget to eat;
By reaſon of my conſtant Groans
I am reduced to ſkin and Bones.
I 'm like the Pelican, and Owl,
That lonely in the Deſerts ſtroll;
As mournful ſparrows percht alone
On the Houſe Top, I walk and moan."

"Tell me, cousin, — what sort o' bottles does God have?" she now asked, as Dorothy glanced at the book held against her knee.

"'Bitha!" Mary exclaimed reprovingly, while Dorothy stared at the child, and began to laugh.

'Bitha could never endure to be laughed at; and being very fond of Mary Broughton, she did not relish her disapproval. And so at this double attack upon her sensibilities, she looked hurt and a bit angry.

"If," she demanded, "'t is wicked to say that God has bottles, what does the Church Book say so for?" And she pointed to the open page.

"Whatever does the child mean?" asked Dorothy of Mary, as she took the book into her own hands.

"There, — right there!" was 'Bitha's triumphant retort. "Read for yourself!" And she trailed a small finger along the lines, —

> "Thou hast a book for my complaints,
> A bottle for my Tears."

"There!" the child repeated. "You see 't is so. Why should God keep bottles in Heaven, — and what sort would He keep?"

"I think you will know more about such things when you grow older," was Dorothy's irresponsive answer; and she handed the book to Mary, while her dancing eyes glinted with topaz hues caught from the sunshine without.

"You are an odd child, 'Bitha," Mary said, smiling in spite of herself as she read the lines.

"That is what I am always told when I ask about anything," the little girl pouted.

Before any reply could be made to this general accusation a shadow darkened the opening of the cave, and looking up, all three sprang to their feet with exclamations of dismay.

A vivid gleam of scarlet shut away the daylight, and a pair of sea-blue eyes, set in an olive-hued face, were looking at them with much curiosity.

The two older girls stood speechless, facing the intruder, whose gaze wandered with respectful curiosity over the regal form and gold-brown hair of the one, whose mouth was decidedly scornful, as were

also her steady blue eyes, which regarded him fearlessly, despite her quaking heart.

Then the new-comer's eyes turned to the smaller figure; and a flash of admiration came into them as his hand stole to his head and removed its covering, while he said with unmistakable courtesy, "Do not be alarmed, I beg of you, — I mean no harm."

"What do you want?" Mary Broughton demanded, seeming in no wise softened by his gentle bearing.

"Only your good-will," he replied, with a smile that showed beautiful teeth.

She flashed a scornful glance in return.

"Good will!" she repeated. "That is something we have not in our power to give one who wears a coat the color of yours." She spoke defiantly, looking the young man squarely in the face.

"Such words, uttered by such lips, almost make me coward enough to regret the color," he said good-naturedly, and as though determined not to take offence.

With this he took a step or two inside the cave; and small 'Bitha, dismayed at the near approach of the scarlet-clad form, clung tightly to Dorothy's gown, pressing her face into its folds.

"Speak him fair, Mary," Dorothy whispered, apprehending possible danger from her friend's want of discretion.

But Mary did not hear, or else she did not care to heed, for she said: "Neither your raiment, nor aught that concerns you, can matter to us. This is our property you are trespassing upon; and I bid you begone, this moment."

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"You are surely lacking in courtesy, mistress," he replied, still smilingly.

The words were addressed to Mary, but his glowing eyes were fixed upon Dorothy, who was still standing with her arms about 'Bitha. The color was coming and going in her cheeks, and something in the big eyes told him that a smile was not far away.

"We have no courtesy for British soldiers," was Mary's haughty answer to his imputation; and there was an angry tapping of her foot upon the shell floor.

He shrugged his shoulders, and turning more directly away from Mary, now spoke to Dorothy.

"I was only wandering about the shore," he declared, looking at her as though pleading for her good-will, "and hearing voices as I stood on the rocks above, I made bold to find out from whence they came."

Mary had not taken her eyes from his face, and now she was quick to answer him.

"Well," she said, before Dorothy could speak, "having found where the voices came from, you 'd best go on about your own affairs and leave us to ours."

"And what if I refuse?" he asked quickly, a flash coming from his eyes as though she had at length nettled him.

"I should try to tumble you over the rocks at your back," she answered with sudden anger; and she stepped toward him as if to carry out her threat.

He moved back hastily, and then, missing his foot-

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ing on the slippery granite, fell over backwards down the rocks.

Dorothy's shriek was echoed shrilly by little 'Bitha, while Mary stood as though transfixed, looking at the opening through which the young man had disappeared.

Dorothy was the first to find her voice. "Mary," she cried in terrified reproach, "you have made him fall into the water, and perhaps he will drown. Whatever shall we do?"

Mary did not reply, but speeding to the entrance of the cave, looked out over the uneven ledges.

The Britisher was lying, apparently unconscious, only a short distance below her, his shoulders caught in a deep seam of the rocks, while the rest of his body lay along a narrow ledge a few feet lower.

"There he is," she said, turning a white face to Dorothy, — "lying there in the rocks."

Putting 'Bitha aside, Dorothy came and looked down.

"See the blood on his face!" she exclaimed wildly. "'T is coming from a cut on the side of his head. Oh, Mary, I 'm afraid you have killed him!"

Mary started to reply; but Dorothy had already sprung past her through the mouth of the cave, and was flying down the rocks to where the wounded man lay.

Tearing the silken kerchief from about her neck, she knelt beside him and endeavored to wipe the blood from his face, while Mary watched her in silence from above, with 'Bitha clinging to her, and crying softly.

"I must have some water, Mary," said Dorothy, who saw that the blood came from a cut in the side of the young man's head, "and I want another kerchief. Throw down yours."

Mary, without replying, tossed down her own kerchief, but without removing her eyes from the white face beneath her.

Dorothy ran to the sand-beach near by, and, having dabbled her bloody kerchief in the water, hurried back; then laying it folded upon the wound, she bound it fast with the one Mary had thrown her, lifting the sufferer's head as she did this, and holding one of his broad shoulders against her knee, while her nimble fingers deftly tied the knots.

Scarcely had she finished when she was startled, but no less relieved, to hear a long, quivering sigh come from his lips; and her color deepened as she looked into his face and met his opening eyes gazing wonderingly into her own. Then they wandered over her bared neck and throat, only to return to her eyes, dwelling there with a look that made her voice tremble as she said, "We are sorry you are hurt, sir; I hope it is nothing serious."

He made no reply, and, after a moment's pause, she asked, "Do you feel able to stand on your feet?"

Still he did not answer, but gave her that same intent, questioning look, as if gazing through and beyond the depths of the eyes above him.

As she stammeringly repeated her inquiry, he sighed heavily, and seemed to shake his dreaming senses awake, for, raising himself a little, he passed

his shapely brown hand over his bandaged head, and laughed, albeit not very mirthfully.

"The other fair young dame must be rejoiced at my mishap," he said, "but — I thank you for your care. I seem to have done something to my head, for it feels like a burning coal." And he touched the bandage over the wound.

"It is the salt water, getting into the cut," Dorothy explained, as he rose slowly and stood before her. "I am very sorry it is so painful; but it will stop the bleeding."

"As it was you who placed it there, I like it to burn," he said in a tone to reach her ears alone. "But I 'll not forget, even when the pain ceases." And he looked down into her face in a way that made her eyes droop.

"I regret very much, sir, that you were injured," said Mary Broughton, her voice coming from over his head.

He glanced up at her and bowed mockingly. Then stooping to regain his hat, he said, bending his eyes on Dorothy, "Tell me the name I am to remember you by."

She did not answer; and he stood looking at her as though awaiting her pleasure.

"That can be no matter," she said at last, and in a very low voice.

"Ah, but it is — a very great matter," he exclaimed eagerly, laying a hand on her arm, as she turned away to climb up to the cavern.

Some inward force seemed to be impelling her, and scarcely aware of what she was saying, she

murmured her own name, and he repeated it after her.

This brought a still deeper color to her cheeks; but as if remembering all she had so strangely forgotten in the presence of this enemy of her country, she pushed away his detaining hand, and passed quickly up the rocks to where Mary was standing.

The young man said nothing more, but looked up at the two; then lifting his hat, he turned and walked slowly away.

CHAPTER XII

HE had scarcely gone when the two girls made haste to leave the cave and return to the house.

"'T is most unfortunate for us, Dot, that he found the cave, or that all this should befall," said Mary, as they went down the rocks. "You know what we have to do to-night; and it may make our work dangerous, now that he has been here."

A soft whistle interrupted Dorothy's reply; and looking up, they saw the lean visage of Johnnie Strings, who was perched upon the rocks above the cave they had just left.

Having attracted their attention, the pedler made haste to join them.

"Well, I snum!" he exclaimed. "Mistress Mary, whatever was the Britisher seekin' about here, an' talkin' about? What ailed his head, all tied up, like 't was hurt?"

"He said he heard us talking, and came to see who it was," small 'Bitha took it upon herself to explain, "and Mary Broughton pushed him down the rocks."

Johnnie began to laugh, but Dorothy turned to the child and said, "'Bitha, you know that it is not true, for he stepped backward himself, and fell over."

"Yes; but 't was Mary made him," 'Bitha insisted.

"And, 'though I was sorry to have him hurt, I was glad Mary made him go away."

"Were you there all the time, Johnnie Strings, and never came nigh to help us?" demanded Mary, indignantly. They were now walking along together, for Johnnie seemed inclined to accompany them to the house.

"Nay, nay, mistress," he declared emphatically, but still grinning, as though vastly pleased. "But I should say ye needed no help from me to frighten away redcoats. I only came up as I heard Mistress Dorothy say you'd made him fall into the water. Then I sat an' watched her tie up his head, — more's the pity; for belike he'll only use it to hatch more deviltry for his soldiers to carry out hereabouts."

"Do you know who he is?" inquired Dorothy, her face taking on a little more color.

"Yes, mistress, — he is a dragoon. I saw him over at Salem t' other day. They call him Cornet Southorn; an' I only hope he don't get to know my face too well." Johnnie winked as he said this, and his voice had a note of mystery.

"I don't believe he would ever harm us," said Dorothy, paying no attention to the pedler's anxiety concerning himself.

Johnnie's eyes fastened upon her glowing face with a look of surprise as he remarked grimly, "He's a Britisher, an' our sworn enemy."

On the porch of the house they found Joseph Devereux, who listened with frowning brows while the girls told him of their adventure.

"Go within, child, to the grandame," he bade

'Bitha, when they had finished; and as soon as she was gone he said to the pedler, "Now, Strings, you may, or may not, know aught o' the work in hand for the night."

The pedler nodded understandingly. "Me an' Lavinia Amelia jogged a bit o' the mornin' down road with the party from here, an' I was reckonin' to offer my help, should it be needed. I was on my way this very mornin' to tell ye that Master Broughton an' the rest thought I 'd better have some of our own men 'round hereabouts, handy for the powder party to-night."

"'T is best that you do so, as matters have turned out. And 't is wiser that you be trusted to give the signals to the 'Pearl,' for a safe landing o' the stuff, and that Mary and Dorothy be left out o' the matter altogether. 'T is no work for women to risk, with the British soldiery skulking about the place."

The day passed without event, save that a number of men — mostly brawny, weather-beaten sailors — came to the house, to go away again after a private converse with Joseph Devereux.

Johnnie Strings was about the place all day, — now wandering down to the beach to look out over the wide expanse of ocean, as he whittled unceasingly at a bit of stick and whistled softly to himself, or else sitting on the steps of the porch, telling wonderful stories to 'Bitha. But wherever he was, or what doing, his keen little eyes were always roving here and there, as though on the lookout for something unexpected.

It was evident that he was nervous and ill at ease; and this, for Johnnie Strings, was a new thing.

Toward sunset he arose from the porch steps and gave a great sigh, as of relief that the day was ended. Then, without a word to any one, he tramped off in the direction of the Neck.

"'T is as well," he muttered to himself, "to see what the devils be doin', an' if they be like to suspect what is goin' on about 'em."

The sunset was of marvellous beauty. It was as if all the golds, purples, and scarlets of the hour had been pounded to a fine dust, and this was rolling in from over the ocean in one great opaline mist.

The waves, curling in to break upon the sands of Riverhead Beach, seemed to be pouring out flames and sparks; while the quieter waters of Great Bay, on the other side of the causeway, looked as though shot through with long, luminous rays of light, that slanted athwart the mists of prismatic coloring, to withdraw swiftly now and again, like search-lights seeking to probe the clear water to its uttermost depths.

But the far-off eastern horizon held aloof from all this glory. It stood out like a wall of pearl and cold gray, with no sail showing against it to Johnnie Strings' sharp eyes, as he took his way across the narrow strip of causeway that left the Devereux estate behind, and led to the Neck and the enemy's camp.

The pedler knew nothing of the passion called love, else he would never have been so lacking in shrewdness as to formulate the scheme now working in his mind. And this, notwithstanding the suspicion that had shot through his wide-awake brain at

the way he had seen Cornet Southorn looking into the downcast face of Dorothy Devereux, and had noted later her words in his defence.

His present idea — and one that had been gathering force all day — was to see the young officer, and while pretending to have come solely to inquire as to his injury, to so lead the talk as to impress upon his mind the needlessness of watching the Devereux place or household, which he should be made to understand consisted only of the women-folk and one enfeebled old gentleman, — the son being away in Boston.

And now, as he neared the enemy's quarters, he chuckled to himself at the cleverness of his scheme.

The British troops had taken possession of the entire Neck, occupying several large warehouses standing near the end, and appropriating even the buildings used by the lighthouse-keeper and his wife, who, with her two children and as many of her most precious possessions as she could carry, had gone across the bay to abide with friends in the town.

Johnnie Strings knew this, and gritted his teeth in silent rage as he saw a group of redcoats standing around a fire where they were cooking some of the good woman's chickens for their evening meal.

They hailed him good-naturedly, and invited him to join them, several of the soldiers recognizing him as one from whom they had purchased certain things necessary for their comfort.

But he declined their offer, and pulling his hat well over his forehead, the better to conceal his features, went on beyond to another group, and demanded to

be taken to the presence of Cornet Southorn, speaking in a way to imply that he had an important message for that officer.

He was ushered at once into the front room of the lighthouse-keeper's abode, where, upon a settle drawn near the window overlooking Great Bay, sat the personage he desired to see.

The young man's head was still bandaged, and the table before him with food and dishes upon it was evidence of his having supped alone; this confirming what Johnnie Strings had suspected, — that the soldiers upon the Neck were at present under the charge of Cornet Southorn.

Captain Shandon, who should have been there, — an elegant fop, high in favor with the Governor, — was sure to avoid any rough service, such as this, preferring to remain until the last moment in Salem, where better fare, both as to food and wines, to say naught of the gentler sex, was to be had.

Johnnie Strings stood in the shadow, without removing his hat, as Cornet Southorn demanded pleasantly enough to know his business.

"I came to see how your head was doin' at this hour o' the day, young sir," the pedler answered in an obsequious tone.

As the last two words came from his lips, the officer scowled. He was only five-and-twenty, and looked still younger; and he was boyish enough to resent any familiarity grounded upon his seeming youth.

"Have a care, old man, as to how you address His Majesty's officers," he said with some severity, ac-

companied by a pompousness illy in keeping with his frank, boyish face.

"I meant no harm, Cornet Southorn," the pedler replied in an apologetic way. "I saw ye over at Salem t' other day, when I was peddlin' my wares there; an' I 've been all day at the house o' Mistress Dorothy Devereux, the young lady who tied up your hurt head this mornin'. And so" — here Johnnie smiled knowingly — "I came to see if ye were any the worse for your fall, which might have been a bit o' bad luck, had not the ledge caught ye an' held ye from slippin' into the sea."

The young man's manner changed at once.

"Did Mistress Dorothy Devereux send you to inquire?" he asked eagerly.

"She send me?" said the pedler cautiously, and lowering his voice. "Lawks! 't is well her old father don't hear ye; 'though sure he be that feeble he 's good for little but tongue fight, an' the only son be away to Boston for this many a day. An' that," he went on to say quickly, seeing that the young man was about to speak, "is one reason why 't is well for me to be about the place till the brother cares to come home, with all those women-folk there, an' no man but the old father, who is feeble, as I 've said. An' 't is not very safe for them, who be easily frighted by strange men comin' 'round, 'specially soldiers."

This was a long speech for Johnnie to make, and he watched narrowly its effect upon the young officer. This was soon apparent, for he said at once, "You have done well to tell me of this, and I 'll see to it that none of my men cause any annoyance to the ladies."

He fell so neatly into the trap that Johnnie Strings could scarcely keep from laughing outright; but all he said was — and very meekly: "Ye be most kind, sir, an' I'll tell Mistress Dorothy what ye say. An' I'll tell her as well that your head be none the worse for its thumpin' on the rocks." With this he backed toward the door.

"No, no," said Southorn, "my head is all right. But come back, won't you, — come and have something to drink before you go?" And he pounded vigorously on the table.

But Johnnie declined, with many thanks, asserting that he never drank anything, — a statement fully in accord with his fictitious story concerning the Devereux household. But he reckoned upon having accomplished his purpose, and so bowed himself out, just as a red-faced orderly appeared in response to his officer's summons.

"Never mind, Kief," said the latter, as the soldier stood stiffly in the doorway awaiting his orders. "I don't need you now." Then, as the man saluted and turned to go, he asked, "Who is that fellow who just left? Do you know?"

"Johnnie Strings, sir, the pedler; 'most everybody knows 'im 'twixt Boston town and Gloucester."

"Ah, yes, I've heard of him before. That is all, Kief; you may go."

As soon as he was alone, Kyrle Southorn, Cornet in His Majesty's Dragoons, bethought himself of how strangely lacking he had been in proper dignity during his brief interview with this humble pedler; and a feeling of sharp anger beset him for a moment as

he took himself to task for his unofficerlike demeanor and manner of speech.

Then came a mental picture of the distracting face he had seen that same morning; he seemed to be looking once more into the girl's eyes, and feeling the soft touch of her little hands about his head.

He recalled all this, and gave utterance to a queer, short laugh, as though in the effort to excuse his folly.

"Either that girl has bewitched me," he muttered, lying back in his chair, "or else the cut in my head has been making me addlepated all day." And he let his gaze wander out through the window, where the dusk was coming fast, blotting out the fort and town like a dark veil, pierced here and there by the dimly twinkling lights showing from the houses.

"I wonder if she sent the fellow?" his thoughts ran on. "She told me she was sorry for my being hurt, and she looked it. But the other — the fair one — she was a tartar." And he laughed again at the recollection of Mary Broughton's angry blue eyes and dauntless bearing.

"From what I've seen of these folk," he said, now half aloud, "it will be no easy matter to suppress their meetings and make them obey His Majesty's laws. They seem not to know what fear or submission may mean." Then, after pondering a few minutes, "I wonder if it would not be a wise thing for me to call upon this man Devereux, as he is so old and feeble, and assure him and his women-folk that I will see to it they be not molested — annoyed in any way? I might see her again, — I might come

to know her; and this would be very pleasant." And now his thoughts trailed away into rosy musings.

If Johnnie Strings had not added fresh fuel to the fire already kindled in the breast of the impetuous young Englishman by Dorothy's sweet face and pitying eyes, — had he not made it burn more fiercely by giving him reason to believe that she had sent to inquire for his welfare, — he might not have thought to carry out his present impulse.

He was seized by a strong desire to see for himself the place where she dwelt, — to look upon her surroundings, — to make more perfect the picture already in his mind, by adding to it the scenes amid which her daily life was passed.

Such was the young man's desire; and his was a nature whose longing was likely to manifest itself by acts, and more especially now, in the very first heart affair of his life.

As soon as the guards were posted and the countersign given out, he discarded his uniform for a fisherman's rough coat, and put on a large slouch hat, which covered his head, bandage and all. And thus attired, he set forth alone to visit the scene of his morning's adventure, and to investigate its surroundings.

CHAPTER XIII

THE night was clear, bright, and starlit, with not a wreath of vapor drifting. The rising wind moaned through the woods about the Devereux homestead, that loomed, a dark mass, and silent as a deserted house.

From the shore below came the hoarse roar of the tumbling water, to mingle with the wailing murmur of the wind; and now and then could be heard, clear-cut and eerie, the cry of a screech-owl from the woods.

As evening closed in, Joseph Devereux had ordered that no lights be shown about the house, lest they might attract the attention of any straggling soldiers; and he felt assured that this warning would be sufficient to intimidate the women into the greatest caution.

As for the men, they were all, even old Leet, out with the party watching at the "Black Hole," — a bit of the sea shut in by a wood that bordered a wide sweep of meadow known as the "Raccoon Lot." It was here that the expected powder and arms were to be concealed by burying them in the earth, after being wrapped in oilskin coverings.

Johnnie Strings had gone alone to the Sachem's Cave, ready to give the signal.

The cave was somewhat farther down the shore, and a light shown above it could be plainly seen from the open sea.

The rising wind piped softly about the closed window where Mary Broughton was sitting in the starlight, absorbed in her own anxious thoughts, until aroused by something unusual in Dorothy's appearance and manner of moving about. The girl was at the farther side of the unlit room, and Mary asked her what she was doing.

A low laugh was the only answer; and upon the question being repeated, Dorothy came to the window, and Mary saw that she was clad in a complete suit of boy's clothes.

The unexpected transition was so startling that for a moment she could not speak, but sat looking at Dorothy in amazement.

"Oh, Dot," she then exclaimed, "you should take shame to yourself for doing such a thing!"

She could see, even in the gloom, the wilful toss of Dorothy's head, whose curls were let down and tied back with a ribbon, thus completing the masculine disguise.

"Whatever are you thinking about, to play such pranks at a time like this?" Mary demanded reproachfully.

"That is just it, Mary," Dorothy replied. She seemed in no wise abashed, but spoke with perfect seriousness. "I do it because of the time, and of what is going to happen to-night. Father said 't was not safe for us to go abroad, because we wore petticoats. Now here is this old suit Jack outgrew years

ago, and I've always kept it to masquerade in; but to-night it will serve me in a more serious matter. I cannot stop in the house; I am too anxious about Jack. I want to see him and the others get ashore in safety; and I've no fear but, dressed in this way, it will be easy for me to do so."

"But you must not," Mary protested. "How can you dare to think of such a thing? Suppose some of the men should recognize you, — and they will be keeping a sharp lookout for strangers — what would your father say?" And she began to have thoughts of seeing him, and so frustrating this wild scheme.

"I tell you I must go, and will go, Mary; so do not try to prevent me. I know every inch of ground hereabouts, and can easily keep out of the way, even should any one try to hinder me. Why will you not go with me?"

Dorothy spoke quietly, but very earnestly; and as she finished, she placed both her hands on Mary's shoulders, as though to compel her consent.

Mary hesitated. There was in her own heart a like desire to that of the younger girl; she, too, wished to get out of doors, and see all that should take place. But she held herself to be more prudent than the impulsive Dorothy, and so for a time she demurred with her inclination.

But it was only for a time. Dorothy's impetuous arguments fairly swept her off her balance, as usually happened with any one who was fond of the girl; and Mary agreed to be her companion.

It was some minutes after this when the two stole

noiselessly down the back stairway and let themselves out of the door opening toward the sheds at the rear of the house. As Dorothy locked it on the outside and put the key in her pocket, she whispered: "We might have bribed Tyntie to let us out, but 't is as well not to risk getting her into trouble. I shall tell father all about it to-morrow, and I know of a certainty he 'll not be angry. To be sure, he may scold me a little; but" — with a low laugh — "I can soon kiss him into good humor again."

"Don't you think, Dot, it is rather of a shame, — the way you do things, and then tell your father afterwards?" Mary asked as they walked along.

"Assuredly not," was the ready answer, "else I might not get so many chances to 'do things,' as you call it. I never do aught that is really wrong; I love my father far too dearly for that. But I am young, and he is old; and that, I suppose, is why we do not think alike about all matters. He has often said I ought to have been a boy, and I agree with him; though I dare say I shall be a proper enough old maid some day. Only," with a laugh, "I cannot quite imagine such a thing."

"No," said Mary, looking into Dorothy's eyes, bright as the stars that were now being shut away by the branches of the trees in the woods they were entering; "no — nor I. But we 'd best stop our chattering and use our eyes and ears. Heavens! what 's that?" And she clutched Dot's arm in sudden fright as a wild cry rang out directly over their heads.

"Pooh!" said Dorothy, with a laugh, "'t is but an

old hoot-owl. If you 'd been in the woods as much as I, you 'd not be frightened so easily."

They came to a halt at the edge of the timber growth overlooking the rock peak above the Sachem's Cave, and crouched among the bushes to watch for the light, keeping a lookout as well upon the sea, for the first signal from the ship.

And there they remained, listening to the incessant crying of the insects in the grass and the rustling of the wind in the trees overhead, these being mingled with the never-ceasing sound of the sea, as the breakers of the incoming tide flung themselves against the boulders with a quavering roar that seemed to pulse the air like great heart-throbs.

Presently Mary whispered, "Why not let us go and stop beside Johnnie Strings?" Then quickly, "Oh, I forgot — the way you are dressed would make it imprudent."

"I should not care very much for Johnnie Strings," Dorothy began; but Mary said hastily, —

"Oh, no, Dot, 't would never do."

A long silence ensued, broken at length by Mary saying in a tone of alarm, "Oh, Dot, whatever would we do, if your father went to speak to you for somewhat, and should not find us in the house at this late hour?"

"No fear of such a thing," was the confident reply. "He has made sure long since that I am abed and asleep."

It was half-past ten of the clock when the two girls left the house; and so they reckoned it must be now several minutes after the next hour.

"Suppose it should be far into the night before the ship comes in sight," Mary suggested, for she was beginning to feel cramped and uncomfortable. "Let's not wait for so long a time as that."

"No, we will not," Dorothy assented with a yawn. But the next moment she was all alive, with her small fingers holding Mary's arm in a tight clutch as she whispered excitedly: "Look, Mary — there it is! There was one light, and 't is gone. Now there are the two; and there comes the third, as Jack said."

The girls arose and stood erect in eager interest, looking out over the water, where, several hundred yards from shore, the lights gleamed and then disappeared. And now their eyes, accustomed to the gloom, discerned a slim blackness, as of a man's form, appear on the highest point of rocks above the cave; and then a soft glow of tremulous light illumined the darkness.

While they watched this, they were startled to see a taller figure spring from the shadows, and a second later the two seemed to melt into one enlarged blur, as if they were struggling.

Quick as thought the boyish form beside Mary broke from the bushes and sped with flying steps toward the peak.

"Dot — Dot — come back!" cried Mary, regardless now of who might hear her. "Whatever are you thinking to do?"

A low but clear reply came to her from over Dorothy's shoulder.

"The lanterns — they must be put out, else Jack may be hurt!"

On, on, she flew, with no fear of the peril into which she might be rushing, — with no heed of her unmaidenly garb. Her mind held but the one thought, — that the lanterns must be extinguished, for danger threatened her brother and his companions if they should seek to land unwarned.

So absorbed were the men in their fierce wrestling that neither of them saw nor heard the slight figure that came straight up to them, and then, dashing at the lanterns, sent them flying into the water beneath.

Then the larger of the two, catching sight of the intruder, relaxed his hold on the other; and Johnnie Strings, with a derisive whoop, twisted his wiry little body from the slackened grip and sped down the rocks and away into the night.

"You young rascal, what does all this mean?' demanded Southorn, for he it was; and seizing the boyish shoulder firmly, he shook the slender form.

Dorothy, although greatly overcome by agitation now that her brave deed was accomplished, thought she recognized the voice that addressed her so roughly, and was silent from embarrassment.

"Are you dumb?" the Englishman asked angrily, shaking her again. "Speak up, you young rebel, or I may try what a salt-water bath will do for the unlocking of your stubborn tongue."

"Stop shaking me, you great — brute," Dorothy gasped indignantly. "Have you no — manners?"

At sound of the soft-toned voice, Southorn seemed to feel that he was dealing with no yokel, as he had supposed; and now, peering closely, he saw that

the head of his prisoner was finely shaped, and the features refined and delicate.

"If you object to rough treatment, my young friend," he said a little more gently, "you should not put your nose into such doings as these." But he still kept a firm hold of the arm and shoulder, as though to stifle any idea of escape.

"I should say 't was you who deserved rough usage, — coming onto my father's land at this hour, and putting your nose into business that can in no wise concern you." Dorothy had by this time fully recovered her composure, and being certain as to the completeness of her disguise, spoke with saucy assurance.

"Your father's land!" exclaimed the young man, in evident surprise. "Pray, who is your father?"

"A gentleman who has no great taste for stranger-folk prowling about his estate." She gave her arm and shoulder a slight twitch, as though to loosen them from his hold. But this he would not have, although his voice had a still milder sound as he asked, "Is your name Devereux?"

"And whether it is or not," she answered, "pray tell me what matters it to you?"

"It matters this to me," he said quickly: "that if it is, then I 'll let you off, and will go on my way, although I don't quite like the looks of the doings I've seen on this rock, and out there on the water."

"By the Holy Poker!" Dorothy exclaimed, bent upon keeping up the part she had assumed. "But you talk as if you were the Lord High Cockalorum himself! Who are you, to say what you do and do not like here, on my father's premises?"

"Never mind who I am. Perhaps I can make more trouble for your father and his household than you are able to understand. But answer what I have asked, and you 'll not be sorry."

Dorothy could not fail to note the earnestness with which he spoke, nor the intent look she felt rather than saw in the dim light. But she met all this with a mocking air and tone as she said, "Since you make it so worth my while to be kind to my neighbors, how know you but I might see fit to tell you an untruth, and say my name was Devereux, when it may be Robinson, or anything else?"

"If this is your father's estate, then your name must be Devereux," Southorn asserted; "for the place is owned by one Joseph Devereux, as I have been told. So there 's an end to your telling me anything misleading. And now answer me this, — know you the one who is called Mistress Dorothy Devereux?"

Dot waited a moment before answering. A new scheme had sprung into her quick-witted brain, — one that promised an effective means of getting rid of his embarrassing presence, this being likely to interfere seriously with the landing of the arms and powder, were that still in contemplation.

She was wondering, too, what had become of Mary Broughton, and what she was doing all this time.

"Answer me," the young Britisher repeated sharply, "do you know her?" And he gave a shake to the arm he still held.

"You seem over-fond of shaking folk, sir," she

remonstrated. "I wish you 'd let go my arm." And she pulled it impatiently.

"I will let it go at once, if you 'll only tell me what I wish to know."

"And what may that be?" she asked, with an innocent *sang-froid* that plainly angered him.

"You are a saucy boy," he said impatiently. "You remember well enough what I asked you. Do you know Mistress Dorothy Devereux?"

"Aye," was the quick reply; "I know her as well as you know your own face that you see in the glass every day." She stood rubbing the arm he had now released, and upon which his grip had been unpleasantly firm.

"Ah — then she is your sister." He had moved so as to stand directly in front of the slight figure, whose head reached but half-way up his own broad chest.

She looked at him for a second and then burst into laughter.

"I know you now," she said. "You must be the Britisher she told of this morning, — the one who came here, and whom Mary Broughton frightened so badly that he fell over and cut his head." And again the mocking laugh came from her ready lips.

"I don't believe your sister told you any such untruth," said the irritated young man. "I missed my footing, and fell; that was all. I meant no rudeness, although the lady you name — Mary Broughton, did you call her? — seemed not to believe me."

"Mary has but little taste for a redcoat," was the dry retort.

"And judging from your own tone, you share her taste," he said, now quite good-naturedly, for he found himself taking a strong liking to this bright, free-speaking lad.

"I? Oh, I don't know," was the careless answer. "Do you not think I am somewhat too young to have much of an opinion upon such matters?"

He smiled, but without replying. Then Dot came closer to him and said in a low voice, "At any rate, I am good-natured enough to say I can show you something that you, being His Majesty's officer, had best know about."

"What is it?" the young man asked. He was now looking around for his hat, which, together with the bandage about his head, had fallen off during his struggle with the pedler.

Dorothy's sharp eyes were the first to catch sight of these; and she picked them up and handed them to him, noting with an odd feeling that he placed the bandage inside his coat and over his heart.

"It is something you may or may not care to see," she replied. "Only I'll warrant you'll be sorry if another reports it first; for I shall show it to the next Britisher who comes this way."

"Very well," he said; "let me see it."

Without further parley, and suspecting a nest of concealed firearms, or something of the like, he followed her down the rocks, going with slow caution, while she went more rapidly and soon stood below, waiting for him. And then, side by side, they set off inland.

Dorothy, skirting as closely as was prudent the

woods where she reckoned Mary was still hiding, took care to remark to her companion, in a voice loud enough to reach her friend's ears, that it would not take over ten minutes to reach their destination, and that then he had best go his own way.

CHAPTER XIV

MARY BROUGHTON was where Dorothy suspected her to be; and standing well back among the deeper shadows, she had been straining her eyes to see all that took place on the rocky platform above the cave.

She marvelled greatly at the lengthy converse Dorothy seemed to be holding with the stranger, after Johnnie Strings disappeared over the side of the rocks in the direction of Riverhead Beach; and she had started out of the wood, half determined to go and meet the younger girl, when she saw her leaving the peak.

A prudent afterthought led her to draw back again when she saw the two forms swallowed up in the deeper darkness lying at the base of the rocks. Then, hearing steps coming toward her hiding-place, she was on the point of calling out, when Dorothy's words came to her ears, and she remained silent, but still wondering what scheme her friend was pursuing, and who was the stranger with whom she seemed to be upon such excellent terms.

Then came the impulse that she had better find her way to the Black Hole, and tell the waiting party of what had happened; and acting upon this, she set out at once.

She had not gone very far when there came to her the sound of tramping feet; and hastening to get out

of the more open part of the wood, she drew aside amongst the denser growth.

She now heard a low-pitched voice singing a snatch of an old song, trolling it off in a rollicking fashion that bespoke the youth of the singer, —

> "We hunters who follow the chase, the chase,
> Ride ever with care a race, a race.
> We care not, we reck not — "

Here the song was silenced by another voice which Mary recognized as that of Doak, an old fisherman, who growled: "Belay that 'ere pipin', Balt. Hev ye no sense, thet ye risk callin' down the reg'lars on us with such a roarin' ? "

They were now quite near; and slipping out of the bushes, Mary called out, "Doak, is that you? "

"Who be it? " he demanded quickly, while all the other men came to a halt.

"It is I — Mary Broughton. Don't stop to question me, but listen to what I have to tell you."

She told them in the briefest possible way of what had happened. And in doing this, she deemed it wiser to tell them of Dorothy's disguise, being fearful of what might befall the girl should the men chance to meet her, — more especially as they would now be on the lookout for the stranger, who was doubtless an ill wisher to their scheme.

Doak chuckled mightily over it all, particularly at Mary's description of Dorothy kicking the lanterns off the rock; and several of the other men gave hoarse utterance to their admiration.

"Ev'ry natur' be fitted for its own app'inted work,"

remarked old Doak, dogmatically. "If Mistress Dorothy had not allers been darin', by the natur' o' things, she 'd never a ketched holt o' the right rope so true an' quick as she hev this night, — God bless her!"

Here a younger voice broke in impatiently with, "But, Doak, we ought n't to stand here chatterin' like this."

"True, true, Tommy Harris," the old man replied good-naturedly. "But," turning to Mary, "what shall ye do, Mistress Mary? Hed n't ye best let one o' the boys tek ye to the house? Ye see we be goin' down to the shore to Master John an' the rest of 'em, as was 'greed we should as soon as we saw the 'Pearl' show her light."

Mary said she preferred to go with them. But the old man shook his head, and his companions began to move onward.

"D' ye think 't would be wise, mistress?" he asked gravely. "Ye see we don't know jest what sort o' work we may find cut out for us, — 'specially if the man ye saw throttlin' Johnnie Strings were a British spy, as belike he were, pretty sure." Then he added impatiently, "I wonder where in tarnation Johnnie hev gone to, thet he did n't cut back to tell us?"

"And I am wondering where Dorothy has gone," said Mary, with much anxiety.

"I rather guess ye need hev no fear for her, mistress," Doak made haste to reply. "She be wide awake, I 'll bet my head, where'er she be."

"But it seems so strange a thing that she should go off in such fashion," Mary said, by no means satisfied with the old man's confident words.

"She went 'cause she wanted to go; an' she wanted to go 'cause she saw work cut out to do, I warrant ye," declared Doak, with whom the girl had always been a great favorite, since the days he used to take her and Mary Broughton on fishing excursions in his boat. "But as to ye, mistress —"

"It is this way, Doak," she said, interrupting him: "you see I cannot get into the house until I find Dorothy; for she has the key of the only door by which I could enter, except I disturbed every one."

"If ye did thet, Mistress Mary, the father would find out all 'bout the prankin', eh?" And he chuckled knowingly.

"And so 't is best," she went on, paying no attention to him, "that I go along with you until we can see Master John; and he will know what to do."

"Very well, Mistress Mary," Doak said; "come 'long o' me, an' 't will go hard with any man as seeks to molest ye, — though, from what Johnnie Strings told me o' what ye did to the spyin' Britisher this mornin' —"

Here he stopped short, both in speech and walking, — for they had been hurrying to overtake the others, now well in advance — and slapping his thigh, exclaimed: "I hev it, I hev it! What a blind old fool I be, not to hev thought o' thet afore! 'T were sure to be the same devil, or some one he sent, thet ye saw fightin' with Johnnie Strings."

"Do you think so?" asked Mary, surprised that the thought had not occurred to her before. "Whatever should make him come back there at this hour of the night?"

"Spyin', mistress, spyin', as 't is the only business he an' his soldiers be sent down to do hereabouts. Who can say how many of 'em be lyin' 'round this minute, to jump on us?"

Mary glanced about apprehensively, and moved a little closer to the sturdy fisherman's side.

They were now out of the woods, and could discern vaguely in the open field before them the dark forms grouped near the shore, awaiting some signal or sign that might bespeak the expected boats.

Mary and Doak joined the others, and they all stood in silence, watching the black water, now streaked with a narrow bar of sullen red from the eastern sky, where, out of a wild-looking cloud-bank, the moon was just lifting a full, clear disk.

"Can ye see aught?" muttered one stalwart fellow to his nearest neighbor, — the two standing near Mary and old Doak.

"Not I," was the low reply. "Mayhap they won't come at all now, since seein' the lanterns go out."

"Whate'er be ye thinkin' on?" chimed in Doak. "Cap'n Brattle hev brought the stuff down, fast 'nough; an' he won't be for carryin' it over to Salem, under the Gov'nor's nose. 'T is to be brought here; an' here, an' nowhere else, hev they got to land it. They 'll only be more on the lookout now — thet 's all. They know us to be here, an' all they hev to do be to get to us. An' get to us they will, 'though the meadow be grass-grown with redcoats, an' the King hisself 'mongst 'em,"

"D——n the King and all his redcoats!" came

hoarsely from another man; and then the talk was stopped by a faint sound from the water.

Doak commanded the men to keep perfectly silent, for only the keenest alertness could catch what the wind now brought to them. It was the faintest imaginable noise of working oars; and it sent a shudder, like a great sigh, through the waiting group.

Mary Broughton felt her pulses thrill as the sound became more distinct; and she glanced nervously about, and back of her, — at the dark woods on the one hand, the frowning rock-piles on the other, and at the sweep of clear meadows in the rear.

"Draw aside, Mistress Mary, do ye now, please," Doak urged, laying his hand upon her arm. "Get over there close by the rocks. For if so be there comes any surprise from the Britishers, 't will surely be from the back of us, here; an' in such case ye'll be safe an' clear from 'em, or from flyin' bullets, if ye get behind the rocks."

She felt the wisdom of this advice, and silently complied, while he went forward to the men, now drawn down close to the water's edge.

The next moment he sent a likely-to-be-understood signal out over the water. It was the curlew's cry, which he imitated perfectly; and while it rang out softly, it was clear and penetrating.

There was a second of silence, save for the wind, and the rippling of the waves upon the shingle; then came a like cry from out the darkness, and seeming nearer than had the sound of the oars.

"Now, then, lads, face 'bout, an' watch afore ye!"

Doak commanded, his voice now strong with excitement; and pushing through them until he reached the very edge of the water, he sent back another call, — loud, clear, and fearless in its sound.

The other men, with faces turned inland, stood with listening ears and keen eyes, each gripping his gun, ready to repel the onslaught of any lurking enemy that might be awaiting a favorable moment to swoop down upon them.

Following close upon Doak's second call there came the unmistakable sound of rapidly working oars. Then a sizable lump of dark shadow showed, speeding toward the beach, and soon defining its shape into that of a large rowboat.

Crouched closely against the rocks, and listening with checked breathing, Mary Broughton almost cried aloud as a step startled her. Then looking intently at the form drawing near, she recognized it, and said quickly, with a deep sigh of relief, "Oh, Dorothy!"

"Yes, Mary — is that you?" The speaker came closer and asked eagerly, "Are those our own men down there on the shore, and was it the boat they were signalling with the curlew's cry?"

"Yes, and the boat is nigh in. But whatever have you been up to, Dot, and who was the man you went off with, and where is he now?"

To this fusillade of questions Dorothy only replied with a laugh. Then she asked in turn, "Where is Johnnie Strings?"

"No one knows," Mary answered. "'T is old Doak down there with the men." And she added

with a little impatience, "But why don't you tell me, Dot — what has become of that man?"

Dorothy laughed once more. "I have been locking him away, out of mischief; and now he 's as safe as if he had stopped where he belonged, instead of coming to prowl about here at this hour of the night. It was the Britisher, Mary, — the same one who gave us such a turn this morning. He mistook me for my own brother, and I improved the chance to lead him away by the nose."

"But how?" Mary asked in astonishment. "What do you mean by all this, and what have you done with him?"

"I made him think that I could show him somewhat of importance to his cause; and so I lured him up into father's new cattle-shed, in the ten-acre lot, and I bolted him in there safely enough, unless he should manage to break the bar that holds the door. I could not lock it, for Trent has the key; but I should think the bar was strong enough to hold the door — at least until the arms be safely landed and stowed away."

"Then he was all alone?" Mary inquired, still too full of anxiety to make any present comment upon Dot's exploit.

"Yes, all alone."

"What did he say to you?"

"Say!" Dorothy exclaimed with a little laugh. "Oh, he said a good many things. He spoke most glibly of Mistress Dorothy Devereux; and he told me that if I 'd say my name was the same as hers, he 'd go away, and not inspect more closely the

goings on he had overseen, and which he admitted were not to his liking."

"Dot!" And Mary's tone was distinctly reproachful.

"Well," almost defiantly, "he did say all that, and more too."

"But," asked Mary, "did he not find you out — that you were a girl masquerading in boy's apparel?"

"Not he," with another laugh. "And I trust he never will, after the hoydenish manner of speech I thought it best to use in keeping up my character. He took me for a young brother of Mistress Dorothy Devereux, I tell you."

"Yes," Mary said musingly, as if to herself, "and I pray no harm may come of it."

"Harm!" Dorothy exclaimed, quick in her own justification. "What harm can come of it? I take it as a most lucky thing that I was able to get him out of the way. Had I not done so, then you might have had something to say about harm."

"He would have been taken prisoner by our men, had he stayed about here," Mary asserted confidently, "and would have been shot, had he made any disturbance. And that would have been just what he deserved." Her usually gentle voice sounded unnaturally hard.

"Oh, Mary," her friend cried, regardless of who might be within hearing, "how can you speak so harshly — and he such a handsome young gallant?"

"What is it to us, whether he be handsome or ill-favored?" was Mary's sharp retort. "What interest have you in him?"

"I should be sorry if he were hurt." And Dorothy's tone was almost tender by comparison with that of her companion.

"Shame on you, Dot!" Mary said in a low voice, but quite fiercely. "How can you talk so, and he a hateful Britisher?"

But before Dorothy could reply, the sound of a boat's keel grating on the sand turned their thoughts to different matters.

"They are in!" exclaimed Dot, exultantly. "And safe!"

"Aye — safe so far," Mary murmured. She was still uncomfortable, and suspicious of some danger lurking in the darkness about them.

CHAPTER XV

THE men were gathered around the boat, shutting it away from the two girls; and the moon's light, now grown silvery, was touching the group in a way to make all their movements visible.

"Mary," said Dorothy, "do you go to the beach and ask Jack to come here to me. I must tell him somewhat; and then let us go to the house." And Mary, nothing loath, complied at once.

A few of the men were rapidly removing the arms and powder, which were well wrapped in oilskins; and two sailors from the "Pearl" were waiting, ready to pull out again the instant the cargo was landed.

Another boat, similarly laden, was approaching the beach; and near it, in a dory by himself, was the missing pedler.

Upon escaping from Southorn, he had betaken himself to the causeway, dragged one of the Devereux dories across from Riverhead Beach to the open sea on the other side, and then set out to find the incoming boats and report the recent occurrence.

This he had done successfully; and John Devereux, now standing among the men and conversing with Doak, knew nearly all there was to be told, while Hugh Knollys was coming in with the second boatload.

So intent was the young man upon what was going on about him that he did not see Mary until she had

spoken to him; but at sound of her low voice he turned quickly and came toward her.

There was sufficient light for her to see the eager gladness in his face as he stood before her, his broad-brimmed hat in his hand, and the curling locks blowing riotously about his brows.

"Mary," was all he said; but his voice was filled with something she had never heard there before.

"Dorothy wishes to speak with you at once," she replied, the faint light giving her courage to keep her eyes upraised to his, for his voice and manner made her heart tremulous.

He drew her hand within his arm, and as they turned away from the shore his other hand stole up and clasped the small soft fingers that rested so lightly upon his sleeve; and he felt them tremble as his own closed more tightly about them.

"Mary," he said once more, and she lifted her face to meet the eyes she felt were bent upon it.

His face was shadowed by his hat-brim; but she could feel his heart beating against the arm he pressed closely to his side, and she could hear how hard and fast he was breathing.

Making no answer, she only looked at him, until without a word he bent his head and kissed her.

"Why, John!" and her voice was well-nigh choked by mingled embarrassment and joy. "Dorothy will see you."

"Aye," he said stoutly; "and I hope she may, and all else in the world see me doing a like thing many times."

They had now come to a halt, and he said impetu-

ously: "I cannot wait another minute, sweetheart, to tell you that I love you; only you surely knew it long ago. But what I do not know, and must know at once, is whether my love is returned."

Her only answer was, "Dorothy is near,—just behind these rocks; come and speak to her first."

"Not one step will I go until you tell me what I ask," he declared firmly. "I have spoken to your father; and I have his consent and blessing, if you will listen to me. So," pleadingly, "tell me, Mary—sweetheart; tell me, do you love me well enough to be my wife?"

A softly breathed "Yes" stole to his ears as Mary bent her head down on his arm. But he raised the glowing face in his hands, and looked a long moment at what he saw revealed by the faint light of the stars.

Then, with a fervent "Thank God!" he bent once more, and laid his lips on hers; and without another word they passed quickly over the few yards to the rock-pile, where a boyish figure stood whistling.

John Devereux started back and exclaimed, "Where is Dorothy? I thought she was here."

"I *am* here, Jack, awaiting your pleasure," a saucy voice replied; and Mary felt her cheeks burn, for something in Dorothy's tone told her that her own precious secret was known.

"Dorothy, what is the meaning of all this?" her brother asked, giving her the full name, and trying to speak with severity. All that Johnnie Strings had told him was of a boy tossing the lanterns over the rocks, as indeed the pedler supposed to be the fact.

"See here, Jack," she said earnestly, "don't scold me now. You can do it just as well to-morrow, and Mary and I wish to get to the house. But before I go I must tell you there is a certain gentleman locked in the new shed, in the ten-acre lot; and when the powder and arms are safe, you had best get him out."

"Who put him there?" he asked in amazement.

"I did," was the answer.

"You, Dot — what for?"

"To keep him from finding out what you had rather he did not know. Only you must promise not to let him be hurt, and that you will release him as soon as you unfasten the door."

"Who is he — do you know?" And he did not speak so good-naturedly as his sister would have liked.

"He is a redcoat, — one of the soldiers quartered over on the Neck," said Mary Broughton, now speaking for the first time. "He came upon Dot and me at the Sachem's Cave this morning, and he has been prowling about the place to-night. 'T was he who surprised Johnnie Strings, and caused Dot to put out the signal-lights."

Mary spoke with animation, almost anger, for she felt a bit indignant at Dorothy's apparent lack of what she herself considered to be a proper view of the affair.

"Aha," muttered her lover, his voice full of sharp suspicion. "Did this man hold much converse with you this morning, Mary?"

"No, very little," she replied uneasily; and Dorothy added with a laugh, —

"I fancy he had a bit more than he enjoyed."

"Johnnie Strings told me of your frightening a Britisher so that he nearly tumbled into the sea," John said, speaking in an approving way. "And so this is the same fellow, is he? But how comes it, Dot, that you found the chance to lock him away?"

"'T is a long story," his sister replied, with a touch of petulance, "and Mary and I must get back to the house. Only," — and her voice softened again — "won't you promise me, Jack, that you will not permit him to be injured? I could never sleep again if I thought I was the cause of any ill befalling him."

She was almost in tears; and knowing this, her brother hastened to say, "There, there, Dot! You 've too tender a heart, child. But your mind may rest easy, for I myself will let the man out as soon as 't is prudent to do so. He shall go his way for this once, but I 'll not promise as to what may befall should he see fit to repeat such a bit of business."

The moon was rising higher, and its light becoming clearer and more silvery. The boats were unloaded, and the sailors were pulling them back to the ship, when the girls saw Hugh Knollys coming toward them from the beach; and at sight of him they turned to flee.

"I must go to the house with you two, Mary;" and John Devereux laid a detaining hand upon her arm, bidding Dorothy wait a moment.

"No need for that," she said quickly, fearing that Hugh might accompany them; "we are not afraid."

But John called out to Knollys, — speaking very

carefully, for it still seemed as though each rock or bush might be concealing a spying enemy — asking him to go to the Black Hole in charge of the men, as he himself must first hurry to the house, to rejoin them later.

Hugh turned back, and the three took their way through the woods, Dorothy keeping ahead and the others walking closely together just behind her.

"Mary," John said presently, and his voice was tremulous as a woman's, "I can scarcely believe it."

"Hush!" she whispered warningly.

But pressing her hand, he said, "Dot knows all about it." And he laughed softly, while Mary's cheeks burned, and she was silent.

Then he added: "You see, I have been under such a strain, so filled with anxious thoughts, that I well-nigh lost my senses when I landed on the beach, and knew you were near me, and heard your voice. Then, afterwards, I was so shocked by Dot's prank when I came upon her by the rocks, that it is just coming to me what the child has done. It was a brave deed; and but for her doing it, who can say what might have happened — brave little girl!"

The slight figure was too far ahead of their lagging footsteps to be reached by his words. Indeed they could not see her at all through the gloom of the woods, although they could hear now and again her light footfall, or the cracking of a twig as she stepped upon it.

"She thinks you are displeased with her prank," Mary said, "and I'm sure she feels very unhappy about it."

"She shall not feel so very long," he replied heartily.

They found her waiting for them at the back door of the house, ready to put the key into the lock. But before she could do this her brother put his arms about her and kissed her fondly.

"Brave little girl!" he whispered. "'T is you who have saved the arms and powder for the town."

To his amazement she burst into tears and clung to him, sobbing and trembling like a child.

"Why, Dot, whatever is it?" he asked anxiously, lowering his voice so as not to arouse the inmates of the house.

"She is suffering from a reaction, I think," Mary said softly; "but it will soon pass away."

But Dorothy was of too dauntless a spirit for her brother to be content with this explanation; and holding her close in his arms, he went on assuring her that he was not displeased, but that she had done a brave act, and that every one would say the same if the news of it should get abroad.

"You must hush your sobs," he said, "and go within, and to bed, where you should have been hours ago. I will find Hugh Knollys, and we 'll go together and release your prisoner."

All this, whispered in her ear while her face was buried over his heart, quieted her at last; and she drew herself away from him as she said with a hysterical little laugh, "Think of the picture I am making for Mary, — a big boy crying in your arms!"

"You should have been a boy, Dot," he whispered,

while she was opening the door; "you've a heart brave enough to do credit to any man."

"And, pray, may not women lay claim to having brave hearts?" queried Mary Broughton, with dignified coquetry.

"Aye, most truly; I should say you and Dot had proved that already. And now, good-night, sweetheart." And to Mary's consternation, he leaned over and kissed her, hurrying away as she hastily followed Dorothy into the house.

No word was spoken as the two girls felt their way cautiously through the pitchy darkness to their rooms above stairs.

The two apartments communicated; and the front windows of each overlooked the meadow lands and woods, together with a far-reaching expanse of the sea.

Aunt Penine's, as well as Aunt Lettice's and little 'Bitha's, rooms were in the wing of the house, on the opposite side; while those of Joseph Devereux were far to the front, and looked out directly upon the grounds and wooded land that ran down to the beach, where the water stretched away to the horizon.

They went directly to Dorothy's chamber; and it was so bright with the moonlight now pouring through the unshuttered windows that they needed no candle.

As soon as the door was closed, Mary said, "Dorothy, I have somewhat to tell you." And she put her arms lovingly about the boyish form, while the solemn tenderness of her tone bespoke what she had to reveal.

"You 've no need to tell," replied Dorothy, speaking in a way to so disconcert Mary that she said uneasily, —

"Oh, Dot, I thought you 'd be glad it was so."

At this, Dorothy threw her arms impulsively around the other girl's neck.

"I *am* glad, Mary," she exclaimed; "I am very, very glad. Only, I knew long ago that you and Jack loved one another." Then, as she hugged her closer, "But you won't love me less for what has befallen?"

Her voice sounded as though the tears were coming again.

Mary tightened her hold upon the slight form, and kissed the upturned face upon which the moonbeams were resting.

"Love you less, Dot?" she declared; "it only makes me love you far more than before; and I have always loved you very dearly, as you well know."

"And I want to be loved, Mary! I feel so lonely!" And now she was crying once more.

"Why, Dot," Mary asked, almost in alarm, "whatever ails you, crying twice in the one evening? I scarce know what to think of you."

"I wish I could see my father," Dorothy sobbed; "I wish I could see him this minute. He always knows me and understands me, no matter what I do or say."

"You are just worn out, poor child," said Mary, in a soothing, motherly fashion; "and no wonder, with all you 've gone through this night. And now,"

she added with decision, "I shall put you straight to bed, this very minute. I want to go myself, but cannot until you become quiet."

With this she began tugging at the fastenings of the unfamiliar garments; and Dorothy, despite her tears, commenced to laugh, but in a nervous, unnatural way.

"Never mind," she said; "I will do all that, Mary, for I understand it better than you. And," straightening herself, "I 'll stop crying. I never knew I could be such a fool."

Long after Mary was sleeping, Dorothy was still lying awake listening for her brother's return. She knew she would hear him, for his room was just across the hall, opposite her own.

As she nestled among the lavender-scented pillows, visions would keep coming to her of the handsome face she had seen that morning, and again that very night. The purple-hued eyes, edged so thickly with swart curling lashes, seemed to be looking into her own, as when she held his wounded head pillowed against her knee, while his voice yet thrilled in her ears as had never any man's before.

And then came the realization that this man was her country's avowed enemy, — a hated Britisher!

Her conscience smote her as she thought of the trick she had played him, recalling how trustingly he had entered the dark shed, and how silent he had been at first, when she slammed the door and shot the wooden bar across. Then how fiercely he had seemed to fling his broad shoulders against the door of his prison, making her fear that he would be able

to come forth and visit his wrath upon the audacious young rebel who had served him such a trick.

But she could find some comfort in thinking of how she had stolen back, and called him by name, at which the blows became stilled; and of how she had then told him to have no fear for his safety, as in a short time he would be released, to go where he pleased.

Mary, did she but know all these thoughts, would be angry, and call her unfaithful to the cause. And Jack, and her father — what would her father say to her?

She had never in her life feared him. But now a quaking dread beset her as to what the morrow might bring from him of censure and displeasure. And at this she began to cry again — softly, but bitterly.

Whether the girl knew it or not, her nerves had by this time become strained to the uttermost; and sleep, the blessed healer that comes so readily to the young and healthful, was beginning to woo her away from all her troubles, when a slight noise startled her into new wakefulness.

Listening intently, she heard her brother enter his room; and she heard him say something to their father, who was passing on toward his own apartments.

Rising hastily, Dorothy thrust her little bare feet into some wool slippers and drew a bed-gown over her night-dress; then she stole softly across the passage to her brother's room.

The door was ajar; and after tapping gently, she put up her small hands to shield her eyes from the glare of the candle he held, as he came to answer her summons, looking wonderingly out to see who it might be.

"Dorothy!" he exclaimed, as he saw the little yellow-robed figure, and the rumpled curls and drooping face. Then, stretching out his hand, he drew her within the room and closed the door.

"Dot, why are you not asleep at this hour? You will surely make yourself ill." He crossed over to a small table and set down the heavy silver candlestick, the light flaring in his weary, but always handsome face, now looking all the darker from contrast with his snowy linen — for he was in his shirt-sleeves.

He came to her once more; and as she did not speak, he took her hands from before her face and held them lovingly. "What is it, child — what is troubling you?"

"Mary has told me, Jack, and I wanted to tell you that I am glad." And two great tears stole from her long lashes and ran down the rounded cheeks, whose bloom was paler than he had ever seen it.

"And is that the face you wear, Dot, when you are joyful?" he asked gently, but with a smile. "What is it, child?" he urged, as she did not speak. "I am so happy to-night, and I cannot bear to see you in tears; it hurts me."

"Ah, no, Jack," she cried, throwing her arms around his neck. "I don't want to hurt you."

He held her fast, and laid his cheek against her

own, as he said softly: "Is it that you are jealous of me, or of — Mary? Is it that you think I cannot love her and love you as well?"

"No, no! Oh, no! It is n't that, Jack. I know you love me, and will always, as long as I live — just as I love you. I am happy to have Mary for my own sister; but I — I —" And she broke down again.

"Now see here, little girl," he said, stroking the round white arm her fallen-back sleeve left bare; "don't fret in your heart about to-night, or whatever you may have done. It is never any use to worry over what is past and gone. 'T is not a maidenly act, Dot, for a girl to array herself in men's garments, and you must never do it again. But we must all admit that 't was a lucky thing you did it this night; and the help you rendered us far more than makes up for your own thoughtlessness. So you need fear no blame on account of it."

"Does father know?" she asked nervously.

"Not as yet; but I will tell him the whole story of your bravery, so he 'll not misjudge you."

She raised her face and kissed him; then after a little hesitation she asked shyly, "And the Britisher I locked in the shed, — did you release him, as you said you would?"

Jack smiled down into the upturned face. "He was gone when Hugh and I got there; and the bar was wrenched off, sockets and all."

"He is strong," Dorothy said, a light coming to her eyes that her brother did not see; and she laughed softly.

"Well, had he the strength of Samson, he'd best take heed to himself how he comes prowling about my father's premises at unseemly hours."

He spoke with angry emphasis; and Dorothy was glad the two had not met.

CHAPTER XVI

THE men of the house breakfasted at the usual hour next morning, and with them were only Aunt Lettice and 'Bitha, Mary Broughton and Dorothy being permitted to sleep until later, when 'Bitha, despatched by her grandmother, went to arouse them.

She first awoke Dorothy by kissing her; then she asked with childish solicitude, "Why do you lie abed so late, Cousin Dot,—are you ill?"

The big dark eyes gazed at the child in bewilderment, and then came a flash of recollection.

"Ill—no. Where is Mary, and why are you here, 'Bitha?"

"Mary is still asleep, and grandame sent me to wake both of you." Then she looked curiously at the carelessly heaped up masculine garb on a near-by chair, and asked, "Are those Cousin Jack's clothes, Dot, and why did he leave them here?"

Dorothy's color deepened. "Never mind, now, 'Bitha," she said hastily, "but go and awaken Mary; then run back to Aunt Lettice, and say we will be down directly. But stop—where is every one—have you breakfasted yet?"

The child laughed. "Long ago," she said. "Cousin Jack and Hugh Knollys have gone off to town on horseback, and Uncle Joseph is away on the farm somewhere."

Dorothy's movements were lacking in their usual youthful vitality as she moved listlessly about the room. She stood in front of her mahogany dressing-case, looking into the tipped-over mirror, — that only in this way could reflect the face and head surmounting her in no wise average height — and was brushing out the tangle of curly locks, when Mary Broughton came into the room, her hair hanging about her like a veil of gold, reaching almost to her knees.

"Good-morning, Dot," she said smilingly. "You were so quiet that I thought you were yet sleeping." And she turned to go back to her own apartment.

But Dorothy called out: "Don't go yet! Oh! Mary, do you know I am dreading so to go downstairs and meet my father. I wonder if he will be angry at what I did last night? He was never angry with me in all my life." And she turned her troubled eyes away from the glass, for which indeed she seemed to have little use, so slight was the note she was taking of the reflection it showed.

"I hope not," Mary replied, but her voice had a touch of doubt, "for he would surely be angry with me as well, for abetting you in what you did. But you remember what Jack said last night; would not your father take the same view of the matter?"

The color deepened in her cheeks as she spoke her lover's name; and this seemed to bring a new recollection to Dorothy.

"Oh, Mary," she cried, "I 'd clean forgot, for the moment, all that has befallen." With this she rushed impetuously across the room and caught Mary about the neck. The latter blushed redder than before,

while she laughingly disengaged Dorothy's arms. Then urging her to hurry and dress, she hastened back to her own room.

The two girls had finished breakfast and were out on the porch in front of the house, when the hearty tones of Joseph Devereux were heard within, asking Tamson, the red-cheeked housemaid, after her young mistress.

"Here I am, father," answered a low, agitated voice; and Dorothy stood before him, looking quite pale, and with eyes downcast.

"Come with me, my daughter," he commanded, and led the way into the library.

He closed the door after them, and seated himself, while Dorothy remained standing, her hands loosely clasped and her eyes still bent on the floor, her attitude being much like that of a culprit before a judge.

"Come here, child," and his voice was a trifle unsteady. "Why do you stand there and look so strangely?"

For answer, she sank upon her knees before him and laid her face in his lap; and a grateful thrill went through her as she felt his fingers stroking her curly head in his usual loving fashion.

"Ye madcap!" he exclaimed after a short silence. "Whatever possessed ye?"

"Oh, father, don't be angry with me!"

At this, he leaned over, and drawing her into his arms, lifted her to his knee.

"Angry with you, my little Dot!" he said. "My precious, brave little girl, how could I be that, except

it were for your risking so carelessly the life that is so dear to my old heart?"

All the sternness of his face had given place to an expression of loving pride.

"One cannot censure an eagle, my baby," he went on, — "that it be not born a barnyard fowl or a weak pigeon. It would seem that a higher power than of poor mortality must have put it into your head and heart to do what you did last night. And I've no word of blame for your having togged yourself out in Jack's clothes. Many a heroine has done a like thing before you. If Joan of Arc had been more like most womenfolk, no doubt many would have reckoned her more properly behaved, according to the laws laid down by men for the behavior o' women. But who dare question the bravery and unselfishness of her deeds? And you, my baby, were our Joan of Arc last night!"

All this was balm to her troubled heart. But she could not speak, and only hugged him more tightly around the neck as she wept on his shoulder.

"Here — hoity toity!" he said presently. "What manner o' bravery be this — crying for naught?"

She raised her head, but before she could reply, they were both startled by a noisy trampling of horses in front of the house, and strange voices coming in through the open windows.

Hastily wiping away her tears, Dorothy sprang from her father's lap and ran to look out.

"Oh, father," she cried, turning to him in dismay, "here be a lot of British soldiers on horseback! Whatever can they have come for?"

He hurried out, Dorothy close by his side, to meet face to face at the open door a tall young officer coming up the steps with much clanking of sabre and jingling of spurs, while on the driveway were a dozen mounted troopers, one of whom held the rein of a spirited gray horse.

The officer raised his hat, and his sea-blue eyes, keen as steel, looked with smiling fearlessness straight into the lowering face of Joseph Devereux. Then they changed like a flash, and with swift significance, as they fell upon the slight figure shrinking close beside him.

"Sir," he asked, "are you Joseph Devereux?"

"As you say," was the calm reply. "And what might an officer of His Majesty's army want with me?"

"Only an audience," the young man answered respectfully. "I wish to assure you, in case of its being needful, of my good will, and of my desire to see that your person and property are guarded from annoyance during our stay in your neighborhood."

The old man frowned, and drew his tall figure to its full height.

"It would seem a strange chance," he replied haughtily, "that should put such a notion into your mind, young sir. I 've lived here as boy and man these seventy years and more, and my fathers before me for well beyond one hundred years; and I 've needed no protection o' my own rights save such as God and my own townsfolk have accorded me as my just due."

"Such may have been the case before now, sir," the officer said, his eyes still fixed upon Dorothy's

blushing face; "but troublesome times, such as these, have brought changes that should, methinks, make you take a somewhat different view of matters."

"The times may be troublesome, as you say; but even should they grow more so, I have my country's cause too truly at heart to desire favors from its enemies."

"I am an enemy only should you determine to make me one; and this I trust you will not." He still smiled pleasantly, as though bent upon accomplishing whatever object he had in view.

"The color o' the coat you wear has determined that matter already," was Joseph Devereux's grim answer.

But the young man was proof against even this pointed rebuff, for he laughed, and said with reckless gayety, "Think you not, sir, 't is a bit unjust to refuse good fellowship to a man because of the color of his garb?"

"A truce to this nonsense, young sir!" exclaimed the old man, his impatience rapidly changing to anger. "Since you are about my premises in the manner you are, 't is certain you can in no wise be ignorant o' reasons existing which make it needless for me to say that I desire naught to do with you, nor your fellows."

The officer bowed, and with a slight shrug of his broad shoulders, resumed his hat.

"So be it, sir," he said, while the smile left his olive-hued face, "although I deeply regret your decision. But before I go, I must have speech with a young son of yours."

Dorothy moved still closer to her father, and turned a troubled look up into his face.

"My son, sir," he answered stiffly, "is not at home."

"No? Then pray tell me where I am like to find him."

"He has gone to the town on affairs of his own."

"They are like to be affairs of great weight." The young man's voice had a note of sarcasm.

"Whatever they be, they can assuredly be no concern of an officer o' the King."

"That is for me to decide, sir," the soldier retorted with evidently rising anger. "He has done that which gives me good cause to put him in irons, should I choose to be vengeful."

"What mean ye?" the old man demanded with flashing eyes.

"I mean," replied the other, slowly, "he shall be taught that he cannot play boyish pranks upon His Majesty's officers with impunity."

"It would seem you are better aware o' what you are prating of than am I," said Joseph Devereux, now laying a reassuring hand over the small one that had stolen tremblingly into his own. "As for my son playing 'boyish pranks,' as you say, he would scarcely be likely to turn back to such things in his twenty-eighth year."

"Do you mean me to understand that your son is so old as that?" was the officer's surprised inquiry.

"I care little of what your understanding may be," was the indifferent reply; "but such is the fact."

"And have you no other son — a young boy?"

"I have not, as any one can tell you."

The young man bit his lips, and looked perplexed. Then, as his eyes turned to Dorothy's flushed face, he smiled again, and said, as though addressing her, "I beg pardon for any seeming incivility; but there would appear to be some mystery here."

"No mystery, young man," answered Joseph Devereux, with unbending severity, "save to wonder why you should come riding to our door in the fashion you have, with a troop o' your fellows, when we have no liking for the entertainment of any such company."

The officer still smiled, but now sarcastically. "It can scarcely be claimed that you have entertained me, sir. But since I find my presence so disagreeable to you, I will bid you good-morning."

He bowed haughtily to the old man, while his eyes still lingered upon Dorothy's face. Then turning quickly, he strode down the steps, and mounted his horse, the servants, who had gathered about, falling away from before him.

Mary Broughton and Aunt Lettice, who had been standing in the hall listening to the colloquy, now came out to the porch and stood with the others watching the scarlet-clad troop clatter noisily down the driveway, following the rapid pace set by their youthful leader.

John Devereux and Hugh Knollys, returning from the town, met them just within the open gate, and drew to one side, watching them with scowling brows as they dashed past; and the young officer turned in his saddle to glance over his shoulder, as if something in the former's face had caught his attention.

"What did those Britishers want here, father?" the son asked, as he and Hugh came up the steps, leaving their horses with Leet and Pashar.

"He would seem to wish to assure us of his courtesy and good-will; and when I declined these, he demanded to see my son, whom he accused of playing a boyish prank upon a King's officer, and threatened him with irons, should he catch the rogue."

All eyes were now turned upon Dorothy, who laid her blushing face against her father's arm as she stood clasping it.

Jack muttered something under his breath; and Hugh, his face alight with mischief, said, "May his search take up all the attention of himself and his soldiers, which will be all the better for us." Then stretching out his hand to Dorothy, he said with a sudden change of manner, "Will you shake hands, Dorothy?"

"What for?" she asked, still clinging to her father's arm.

"As my way of thanking you that I am a free man this morning, and not, perchance, in irons myself, and on the road to the Governor, at Salem."

She laid her small hand in his broad palm, and the look he gave her as his fingers closed over it seemed to make her uncomfortable.

"It was very little I did," she declared quietly, drawing her hand away.

"So it may seem to you," he said gravely. "But had it not been done, the things that might have followed would show you otherwise."

In the afternoon the four young people set out to ride over to Hugh's place, where a widowed mother was anxiously expecting the arrival of her boy — and only child.

Jack, for reasons now well understood, kept close to Mary's bridle-rein; so it befell that Dorothy and Hugh were thrown upon one another's society more intimately than for some time heretofore.

As they rode leisurely along the Salem turnpike toward their destination, which lay away from the town, the young man exclaimed suddenly, "I don't believe another girl living would dare do such a thing, Dorothy, as you did last night!"

"Do cease prattling of last night," she said impatiently. "I am sick to death hearing of it."

"Are you?" And Hugh's laughing eyes widened with sober surprise. "I see no call for you to be so."

"I did not ask that you should," was the tart answer, a wilful toss of her head accompanying the sharp words.

"Why, Dorothy, whatever ails you?" And he looked more surprised than hurt at this new phase of his quondam playfellow's disposition.

She did not reply; and Hugh, seeing a glitter of tears in her eyes, said nothing more.

And so they plodded along in utter silence; the two ahead of them seeming to find no need for haste, and conversing earnestly, as though greatly entertained by each other's company.

The thickly planted cornfields rose on either side of their way, and the afternoon sun flickered the landscape with fleeting shadows from the clouds sail-

ing in the blue overhead, while now and again there came a glimpse of the sea.

Everything about them was quiet, save the breathing of the horses and the noise of their trappings.

At length, coming within sight of the Knollys homestead, the two in front drew rein and waited for their companions to join them.

Dorothy gave the impatient mare her head, and rode up briskly, with Hugh not far behind; and then all four went clattering through the gate and up the grass-grown roadway, halting before the porch of the low frame house that stood surrounded by thickly planted fields running back to meet sloping wooded hills, with grassy meadows intervening, where flocks of sheep and many cows were grazing peacefully.

A sweet-faced old lady — Hugh's mother — came out of the door and greeted them cordially, but first casting a searching glance at her son. Then bidding a servant take their horses to the stable, she invited them to come within.

But Hugh said: "No, mother; Sam need not take the horses away. We can stop but a short time, and then I must go back to remain in town for the night. I only rode over — and these kind folk with me — to see how you were faring without having me to look after matters, and to assure you of my well being; for I know how you like to fret if I stop away long enough to give you the chance."

"You are a saucy boy," his mother replied, but with a look that belied her words; then turning to the two girls, she asked after their fathers, and in-

quired particularly about each member of their households.

She listened eagerly to the news of the town, and its latest doings; the color, fresh as a girl's, coming and going in her cheeks, and making a dainty contrast with the snowy muslin of her mob-cap and the kerchief wound about her throat and crossed over her ample bust.

"And have any of these red-coated gallants stolen their way to the hearts of you two girls?" she asked banteringly, — her eyes upon Mary Broughton's beautiful face.

Jack's eyes were there as well; and Hugh alone saw the sudden mounting of the blood to Dorothy's cheeks and the troubled drooping of her eyelids.

John Devereux rose from his chair, and taking Mary's hand, led her to the old lady.

"I am that one, good Mistress Knollys," he said proudly, "who has stolen his way to this sweet girl's true heart; and you are the first, outside the family, to know of it."

"Dearie me!" exclaimed Mistress Knollys, in a happy fluttered way, as she drew Mary's blushing face down and gave her a hearty kiss. "I always suspected it would be so; and I am sure every one will wish you joy, as I do with all my heart." Then turning to her son, "Hugh, dear, get some wine and cake, and let us pledge our dear friends. With all these Britishers bringing trouble upon us, who can say how much chance there 'll be left for joyful doings?"

She bustled about with a beaming face, doing her-

self most of the setting forth she had requested of her son. But Hugh's face looked far graver than was its wont; his eyes strayed over to Dorothy, who was now laughing and chatting like the rest, and he seemed to be puzzling over a matter for which he could not find a ready solution.

It was later than they thought when they set out upon their return, Mistress Knollys urging them to come again soon, and saying, as she kissed Dorothy last of all: "It ever makes me feel young again, my dear child, to have you in the house. And now that your brother and Mary have one another, and your father has one more daughter, they can spare you to your old friend with better grace."

CHAPTER XVII

THE air was yet chill with the fresh north-wind, that had blown all day, to go down only with the sun, while the misty horizon of the afternoon was now a well-defined fog-bank rolling in from over the sea, and sending a damp breath in advance of its own coming.

"We shall have a nasty night," said Hugh, looking at the smoke-like wall. He and Dorothy were again riding side by side, with the other two just ahead, but out of ear-shot, and they were making a short detour across the fields, their course taking them past the Jameson place.

It was a pretentious-looking house, painted white, with green blinds; and a broad piazza was set back amid the fluted columns that ran up to support the upper floor, whose dormer windows jutted out among the branches of the oak and elm trees. On the piazza were several scarlet-coated gentry.

"Enjoying himself, no doubt, with rogues of his own ilk," was John Devereux's comment, as he looked over his shoulder at Hugh, — the two now being quite close to one another.

"There might be a thousand rather than a hundred of the redcoats at the Neck, by the way they seem to be ever turning up about the place," Hugh muttered in reply, without taking the trouble to look toward the house.

"And here come some more," announced Mary, in a tone of disgust, as half-a-dozen scarlet coats appeared suddenly in the field before them.

They were riding at a reckless pace which soon brought them abreast of the four, who were now taking their way quite soberly. And as they swept past, the officer in the rear doffed his hat, while he bent his eyes upon Dorothy's flushed face with an intensity that made Hugh Knollys say half aloud, "The impudent young dog — what does he mean?"

Mary Broughton sat rigidly in her saddle, turning her head away at sight of the face disclosed by the uplifted hat. But Dorothy smiled shyly into the bright, daring eyes.

A little farther along they came upon three fishermen trudging the same way as they were bound, one of them being young Balt, whose attempt at singing had brought upon him Doak's wrath the night before.

"Jameson be givin' a dinner to some o' the redcoats," he said, as the riders overtook him and his companions, one of whom added angrily, —

"An' he best have a care that he don't get his roof burnt over him an' his d——d King's friends."

"Have a care yourself, man," said John Devereux, warningly. "'T is not wise to do aught yet that will give them a handle to use for our own hurt."

"Aye," muttered the third, "that may do for now. But if Jameson don't go with his own sort when they leave the place, it may not be so easy for him as it has been in the past."

"How long, think ye, Master John, afore the redcoats quit the Neck?" inquired Balt.

"That were a hard matter for any one to say," was the young man's reply. Then, as he urged his horse forward, he turned to add over his shoulder, "But take my advice, and avoid any brawling with the soldiers, for the present, should you run foul of them."

"That will have to be as it may," one of the men answered doggedly, "accordin' as to how they mind their own affairs and let us alone."

"We shall come to have fighting in our streets yet, Jack; you may be sure of it," said Hugh Knollys. "Our men can never brook with any patience the swaggering of these impudent fellows."

The other glanced at him warningly, with a significant motion of the head toward Dorothy; but the girl did not appear to notice their talk, and was looking dreamingly away into the distance.

Mary Broughton, who was slightly in advance, turned her head; and Hugh saw how her blue eyes were kindling as she exclaimed, "I, for one, should not care if we *did* come to blows! I'd like to see our men show the Britishers that they cannot have matters altogether their own way down here."

"Would you like to take a gun yourself, Mary, and help teach them this lesson?" was Hugh's laughing question.

"Yes," she declared resolutely. "And I am sure I could handle it, too."

"You'll never need to do that, sweetheart, so long as I live to carry out your mind," said Jack, who had been wondering why Hugh looked at Dorothy so oddly, and why she was so strangely silent.

When the early evening meal was over that night, the two young men took their way into the town, where a meeting was to be held.

Old Leet rowed them down, they preferring this as being least likely to attract notice; and avoiding the old wharf, they landed on the beach, near the warehouses, thence taking their way cautiously through the fish-flakes that filled the fields, until they reached the streets up in the town. These were deserted, but filled with lurking shadows, being dimly lit by a stray lamp fastened here and there to the buildings.

They walked slowly toward the town hall, while they talked in low tones of Jameson, making no doubt but that his attentions and hospitality to the Britishers would be known and commented upon at the meeting.

When close to the hall a wild clamor broke out from somewhere ahead of them; and they hurried forward to learn what it might mean.

It was a street fight between the redcoats and the townspeople; and although no powder was being used, strong arms and hard fists were doing almost as painful work.

The British frigate "Lively" had dropped anchor in the harbor at sunset, and as soon as darkness came, a press-gang had been sent on shore to capture such sturdy fishermen as might be abroad, and impress them into the service of His Majesty's navy.

Several men had already been taken, and they were resisting most lustily, while such of their friends as chanced to be in the streets were coming to their rescue.

But these were few in number, as most of the citi-

zens who were not at their homes were now gathered in the town hall, awaiting the opening of the meeting, which was to be of more than usual importance, as measures were to be taken with respect to the new tyranny indicated by the presence of soldiers quartered upon the Neck.

While the two young men paused on a street corner overlooking the combatants, hesitating as to what might be the best thing for them to do, the light from a house over the way shone down upon one figure, as though singling it out from the others.

It was that of a swarthy, strongly built young fellow, taller than most of those about him, and with a bright, resolute face. Hatless, and in his shirt-sleeves, he was raining heavy blows upon such of the enemy as sought to lay hands on him.

"'T is Jem Mugford!" exclaimed Hugh. "See, Jack, what a gallant fight he is making for himself!"

Mugford was well known in the town, and was already, despite his youth, the captain of a merchant vessel. He had been but recently married; and Jack and Hugh recalled the sunny morning when they saw him, looking so handsome and happy, alongside the pretty girl he had just taken for his wife.

They both, moved by the same impulse, now made a dash toward him; but the surging crowd — of friends and foes alike — came between in a way to frustrate their intention. Then, while they were still struggling to reach him, there went up a loud, angry shout

bristling with vigorous oaths: "They've got Jem! They've got him an' carried him off! Squael 'em, squael 'em!"[1]

The cries and tumult were deafening; and the dark mass rolled slowly down the street, leaving the young men almost alone.

"'T is an outrage!" exclaimed Hugh Knollys, panting from his unavailing exertions. "We need all of us to carry guns to guard against such dastardly work. What will his poor wife do, and her father, now that they'll not have Jem to look to for support and defence?"

"I take it she will not lack for good defenders," answered Jack, his voice trembling with anger, "not so long as you and I live in the town, to say naught of his other friends. With the enemy in our harbor, and amongst us in the very town, the quicker we arm the better, say I. Let us go first to see Mistress Mugford, and then we'll go to the hall."

But Hugh held back, for he had a wholesome dread of women's tears and hysterics.

"There will be plenty to tell her the bad news, poor soul," he said; "and women, too, who will know best how to console and comfort her."

Jack saw the force of this, and did not press the matter; so they took their way to the town hall, which was already crowded, although its tightly shuttered windows gave no sign of the life within. The door was strongly barred, and only opened to the new-comers after they had satisfied the sentinel on guard of their right to be admitted.

[1] "Rock them!" i. e. "Throw rocks at them!"

Gray heads and brown were there, the old and the young, representing the best blood of the town. And there was a generous sprinkling of weather-beaten and stout-hearted sailors and fishermen, who listened silently, with grave faces and eager eyes, to all that was said.

The talk was for the most part a review of matters considered at former meetings, to the effect that Parliament, being a body wherein no member represented the colonies, had yet undertaken the making of laws affecting not only the property, but the liberty and lives of His Majesty's American subjects — it was argued that such right did not exist, nor any authority to annul or in any manner alter the charter of the Province, nor to interfere with its councillors, justices, sheriffs, or jurors.

The matter of the British soldiers being quartered upon the Neck was also taken up, and with it the outrage committed that very evening by the press-gang; and in view of these attacks upon the peace of the town it was deemed wise to push forward at once the measures already agitated looking to protection and safety.

The fort was to be repaired, and put in condition for proper defence. The militia consisted at this time of a regiment of seven companies of active, well-disciplined men, but under the command of officers commissioned by Governor Gage or his predecessors. It was deemed expedient that these should no longer act, but that they should be replaced by others chosen by vote of the town. And every citizen should possess himself of a firearm and bayonet,

both in good order, and should be equipped with thirty rounds of cartridges and ball, as well as a pouch and knapsack.

It was also resolved that effectual measures be taken for the silencing, or expulsion from the community, of those "ministerial tools and Jacobites," who persisted in opposing the action of the various committees, or else held themselves aloof from taking part in the measures needful to protect the rights of the Province and people.

These men who thus spoke and conferred with each other were an impressive embodiment of the spirit which actuated the entire community. Their looks and words were glowing with prayerful earnestness, their manner full of dignity and solemnity.

The memory of these, — of their lofty ideality of aspiration, of the purity of their principles and motives, their love of country and integrity of purpose, — all this is a sacred treasure for the old town, and one still potent with patriotic influence.

Theirs was not the courage that shows forth in bravado, and which delights, from mere exuberance of spirit, in defying peril for its own sake. Rather was it the true, deeper courage of devotion, — the courage that sacrificed self for others, and which for principle and what was deemed simple duty was ready to endure all things. It was the devotion that would accept all results, would meet death, if needs be, or wear life away in slow suffering.

Such courage was the solid material, not the flash and glitter that pleases and bewilders, and then is as unremembered as is the pebble a child tosses into

the sea, and having watched the ripple it makes, never thinks of again.

All this has become the priceless jewel of our national history for all time, the salt that gives savor to our country's life. The keynote of it was this, — these men truly loved their country, and were its loyal, steadfast friends. And are we not told from the highest of all high sources that "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"?

CHAPTER XVIII

IT was nearly midnight when the two young men took their way back through the fields to their boat and its faithful guardian.

They were soon afloat, and none but Leet would have ventured to row so steadily and rapidly down Great Bay in the fog that now shut in about them like a wall of white wool, muffling all objects from sight.

The stillness was intense, save for the lapping of the water on the near-by shore, — this seeming to quicken the old darkey's acute knowledge of the course he was rowing.

The young men sat in either end of the boat, with Leet between them; and not a word was spoken until the keel grated on the sand of Riverhead Beach.

The old negro required no light to secure the craft in its accustomed place; and as the others stood waiting for him to do this, a faint sound of galloping horses came to their ears, apparently from down Devereux Lane, which led from the Salem road directly to the beach, and so on to the Neck.

They listened intently, while the sound came unmistakably nearer.

"Hist, Jack!" said Hugh, in a low voice; "that must be the redcoats coming from Jameson's dinner."

"'T is sure to be, judging from the reckless fashion of their riding. Leet, come with us, — 't is as well to

step behind the boathouse until they pass, for we want no challenging at this hour of the night." And as John Devereux said this, he and his companions passed quickly behind the small building.

A dull yellow gleam showed smearingly through the fog as the horsemen clattered by, with here and there a lantern fastened to their saddles; and their loud laughter and boisterous talk seemed to bespeak a free indulgence in good wines and liquors.

As they struck the beach they fell into a more sober pace, and the last two, riding side by side, were talking in tones that came distinctly to the ears of those concealed behind the boathouse.

"'T is like that Southorn hopes to obtain more certain information by accepting the old fellow's hospitality," said one of them; "for it cannot be that the wine is the only attraction, to judge from the way he passed it by to-night."

"Aye," was the reply. "He seemed not to care whether it were good Christian fare we were having once more, or the dogs' food of the camp."

"Maybe he is sickened, like the rest of us, with this heathen land and its folk, and rues the day he ever left the only country fit for a man to live in, to be sent to this strip o' land, with never a petticoat or bright eye to make the stupid time a little more bearable."

The other man laughed. "Perchance if we could but get speech with Jameson's fair friend of whom he prated so much, we might be singing another tune. What was it he called her — such a heathenish name it was never my lot to hear before?"

"He called her 'Mistress Penine;' but she is no blushing maid, for he said —"

Here the words, which had been growing less distinct, died away altogether, and the glow of the lanterns was shut off by the fog, as the clattering of hoofs became lost in the roar of the surf beating in from the seaward side.

John Devereux had refrained from acquainting Hugh with his father's discovery of Aunt Penine's treachery; but now, as they walked toward the house, he told him the facts.

"Think you, Jack, that she has been holding any further communication with Jameson?" Hugh asked.

"That would seem most unlikely, for she has been confined to her room since last Monday night, and both my father and Dot have been watchful of the servants, although I do not believe there is a traitor amongst them. As to Pashar, he is too young to rightfully sense what he was doing, even if he had the wit. Fear of Aunt Penine on the one hand, and a liking for Jameson's loose silver on the other, were his only incentives; but dread of my father's displeasure has now put an end to all that."

He had persuaded Hugh to return with him for the night, instead of going to the house of a married cousin living in the town, as he proposed doing, for the reason that it would put him so much farther on the way to his own place, whither he intended to ride the next morning, notwithstanding it would be the Sabbath.

They found the household long since retired, save

only its head; and when they were seated in the dining-room the young men gave him a detailed account of the evening's doings.

When this had been done, Joseph Devereux imparted to them his determination to lodge with the committee the name of his sister-in-law, to be listed with those of the other unfaithful townspeople. He had also resolved that on the following Monday she should be carried in his coach to her brother's house, in Lynn, for a future residence.

This had come from the fact that soon after the two young men had departed for the town, a messenger from Jameson brought her a communication.

The fellow had refused to leave without a reply, until forced thereto by the servants whom Joseph Devereux summoned for that purpose; and he went away threatening vengeance upon the entire household when he should have reported to his master the indignity to which he had been subjected.

"Do you know, father," asked Jack, "what it was to which he expected an answer from Aunt Penine — I mean, anything as to the contents of the letter?"

"Nay, my boy. She refused to see me at first; and when I insisted upon it, she became defiant, and would not converse with me o' the matter, saying that it was her own concern, and naught to do with my business. And so I told her that, such being the case, she should hold herself in readiness to be driven to her brother's house on Monday, when she and her concerns would give no further trouble to me or my household."

"Jameson will not be safe a moment," said Hugh Knollys, "after the redcoats are withdrawn. Indeed," he added, "'t would be no great wonder if some of the fisherfolk should even now burn the roof over his head."

"'T is to be hoped they'll do no such thing," said the elder man, shaking his head; "for 't would surely be used as a pretence for injuring the innocent,— perchance the townsfolk at large."

He now turned to his son and said in a tone of deep anxiety: "By the way, Jack, we must see to it that all be over-careful how such matters be talked on before Dot. I know not what has come to the child. She has been moody and unlike herself all the evening, starting at every sound, as if fearful o' danger. And when she came to tell me good-night awhile ago, she broke down in great weeping. I had much ado to soothe her; and to all my questioning she had but the one answer, that she did not know what ailed her, only that she felt as though her heart would break."

Jack looked very serious, and Hugh Knollys moved uneasily in his chair. Then the former said: "Perhaps it is only that she is in a way unstrung from the excitement of last night. I thought this afternoon that she acted not quite like herself,—that she seemed to have something on her mind. Did you not note it, Hugh?"

Hugh started, and looked still more uncomfortable. His thoughts had been dwelling upon Dorothy's unusual behavior during the afternoon. He was thinking of her reticence and impatience,—of the

acerbity of her manner toward himself; and he recalled the quick flushing of her face as the young officer lifted his hat.

All this had made a distinct impression upon him; but the affair was her own, — one which he felt reluctant to mention even to her father or brother. And so, in answer to Jack's direct question, he uttered one of the few falsehoods of his life.

"Nay, Jack; I noted nothing unusual in her manner. I think as you, that she has been a bit overwrought by last night's happenings. Ah," he exclaimed, with animation, and glad to speak the truth once more, "but it was a brave thing she did! And yet she likes to make naught of it."

"Dorothy is brave by nature," her father said, his eyes kindling with pride. "And she is too young to comprehend the full weight o' what she did, prompted as it was by impulse, and by love for her brother." Then turning to Jack, he asked with a change of manner, "Did you see or hear aught o' the British frigate on your way home?"

"Nothing, father, — only, as I told you, that she dropped anchor in Little Harbor, just as the darkness fell."

"She 'd not be likely to go from her anchorage in this fog." The old man spoke musingly, while he slowly filled his pipe for a final smoke before retiring for the night.

"But I take it they will move from there as soon as may be, on account of fearing the trouble they have a right to expect because of the men they 've stolen," Hugh said indignantly.

"Yes," added Jack, "even if only to get into Great Bay, and closer to their fellows on the Neck."

"'T is a thousand pities they should have taken Mugford," the old gentleman remarked, as he carefully lit his pipe.

"Yes," his son assented; "it is in every way a pity, for if they wish to invite trouble they could not have made a better opening for ill feeling among the people of the town."

"Indeed they could not," Hugh exclaimed hotly. "Every one is sure to take Mugford's abduction to heart, and find a way to make the redcoats answer for it."

"We shall find a way, please God, to make them all answer for their overbearing and insolence to us as a country as well as individuals," Joseph Devereux said gravely. "And that reminds me, I had surely thought Broughton and the rest o' the committee would have returned from Boston this night."

"He was very doubtful, as I think, of getting back before to-morrow, or perhaps until Monday." And a dreamy look softened Jack's face, as if he might be thinking of what was to be told when Nicholson Broughton returned.

"Jack, what a lucky beggar you are!" exclaimed Hugh, with a touch of envy in his tone, as the two young men tarried a moment in the former's room before saying good-night.

Jack opened his eyes still wider, exactly after the fashion of Dorothy when she was surprised.

"You see," Hugh added nervously, "you love Mary Broughton, and she loves you, and you have

the approval and blessing of both fathers. Now I —" Here he stammered, and then became silent.

"What is it, Hugh — do you wish me to understand that you love Mary yourself?"

John Devereux spoke seriously, almost jealously, for an old suspicion was beginning to awaken once more within him.

But Hugh laughed in a way to forever remove any such feeling from his friend's mind.

"I — I love Mary!" he exclaimed. "I never dreamed of such a thing, Jack, although I admit that she is very beautiful, and possesses everything to call forth any man's best and deepest love. But, my dear Jack, if you were not blinded, you might see that the world holds other girls than Mary." And he looked wistfully at his friend, as if wishing him to know something he hesitated to put into words.

"Do you mean that you are in love with some one, Hugh?" asked Jack, laying his hand on the other's broad shoulder.

Hugh's blue eyes lowered as bashfully as those of a girl, and Jack, now smiling at him, said, "Who is it — Polly Chine, over at the Fountain Inn?"

"Polly Chine!" Hugh answered disgustedly. "A great strapping red-cheeked clatter-tongue, who can do naught but laugh?"

"Well, if 't is not Polly, then I am all at sea, for I never knew you to do more than speak to another girl, unless —" And he paused, as something in Hugh's pleading eyes caught his attention and awoke his senses with a rush.

"Oh, Hugh — it surely is not — " But Knollys interrupted him.

"Yes, Jack," he said with slow earnestness, "it is — Dorothy."

Silence followed this avowal, and Jack's hand fell from his friend's shoulder. Then with an incredulous laugh he said: "Dorothy — why she is little more than a baby, with no thought beyond her horse and other pets. 'T was not long since I came upon her playing at dolls with little 'Bitha."

"She will be seventeen her next birthday," Hugh retorted with some impatience; "and that is but a year less than Mary Broughton's age."

"Yes," Jack admitted. "But it is several months yet to Dot's birthday; and those months, nor yet another year, can scarce give to my little sister the womanly depth for sentiment and suffering that Mary now possesses."

"Think ye so, Jack?" said Hugh, as though inclined to argue the matter. "You know 't is odd, sometimes, how little we guess aright the nature of those akin to us, however dear we may love them."

The young man sighed as he thought of the look he caught in Dorothy's eyes when the olive-faced horseman uncovered his handsome head, and also recalled the flushing of her cheeks at his mother's banter.

Jack's hand was now once more upon Hugh's shoulder, and he said in his warm, impulsive way: "See here, old fellow, I 'd sooner have you for a brother than any other man I know; and my father

is well-nigh certain to approve. Only I feel sure he would say what I now ask of you, and that is, not to speak of such matters to little Dot — not yet awhile; for it would only risk making her think of what otherwise might never come into that wilful head of hers. And while there seem to be such grave matters gathering for our attention, it were best not to give her heart aught to trouble over."

"Then you admit she might be woman enough to take to heart whatever ill would come to me?" Hugh asked eagerly.

Jack's answer was guarded, although not lacking in kindly feeling.

"The child has a warm heart, Hugh, and has known you long enough to feel deep sorrow should any evil come to you — which God forbid. But take my advice, and do not stir deeper thought in her, to make her sorrow like a woman, but let her keep her child's heart awhile longer."

After the young men had bidden each other more than a usually cordial good-night, Hugh Knollys remained seated for a long time in his own room, his hands deep in his pockets, and his legs stretched to their uttermost length. He was lost in thoughts that were neither entirely pleasurable nor yet altogether lacking in that quality.

He had loved Dorothy since she was a child, and he admired her character far more than that of any girl he had ever known. The reckless daring of her nature — the trait Aunt Penine had censured so severely, and which the others of the family regarded somewhat askance — met with a quick sympathy from

his own impulsive temperament; and this last outburst of her intrepid spirit had acted like a torch to set aflame all his dreams and desires. And now the suspicion that some sort of an understanding existed between the girl and this young Britisher gave him a fierce desire to speak out, and claim for his own that which he feared the other man might seek to take from him.

And so he chafed at his friend's injunction, hoping as he did, that, could he but obtain the first hearing, the redcoat's chances might be weakened, if not destroyed altogether.

As he sat here alone, there came to him like a flash the memory of one late afternoon in a long-ago autumn, when, upon his return from a fishing-trip, he found Dorothy — then a dimpled mite of seven or eight — visiting his mother, as she often did in those days.

The child had been left to amuse herself alone; and this she did by taking down a powder-horn hanging upon the wall, filled with some cherished bullets which Hugh was hoarding as priceless treasures.

He seemed to see again the great dark room, lit only by the leaping flames from the logs piled in the open fireplace, and the little scarlet-clad child looking up with big startled eyes at his indignant face as he stood in the doorway, while the precious bullets poured in a rattling shower over the wooden floor. He saw once more her look turn to fiery anger, as he strode over and boxed her ears; and he could hear the girlish treble crying, "Wait, Hugh Knollys,

until I am as big as you, and I 'll hurt you sorely for that! "

Aye, and she had already hurt him sorely, for all his breadth of shoulder and length of limb; she had hurt him in a way to make all his life a bitter sorrow should she now reject his love!

CHAPTER XIX

OCTOBER had come, with an unusual glory of late wild-flowers and reddened leaves.

The soldiers were still quartered upon the Neck, and owing to the many collisions between them and the townspeople, the Governor had seen fit to augment the force. Several times the citizens had almost determined to march to the Neck and exterminate the entire body of Britishers; but wiser counsels prevailed, and no attack was made.

Governor Gage had issued a proclamation forbidding the assembling of the legislature which had been called to meet at Salem upon the fifth of the month. But notwithstanding this interdiction it had convened upon the appointed day, and resolved itself into a Provincial Congress.

Azar Orne, Jeremiah Lee, and Elbridge Gerry were the delegates representing Marblehead, and they took a prominent part in the proceedings. A number of important matters were discussed and acted upon, and a committee was appointed for "Observation and Prevention," and with instructions to "co-operate with other towns in the Province for preventing any of the inhabitants, so disposed, from supplying the English troops with labor, lumber, bricks, spars, or any other material whatsoever, except such as humanity requires."

The loyalists in the town were still zealous in the King's cause, and would not be silenced. And they entreated their neighbors and friends to recede, before it became too late, from the position they had taken. But the only reply of the patriots was, "Death rather than submission!" And they went on making provision for the organization of an army of their own.

Companies of "Minute Men" were enlisted, and these were disciplined and equipped. A compensation of two shillings per day was to be allowed each private; and to sergeants, drummers, fifers, and clerks, three shillings each. First and second lieutenants were to receive four shillings sixpence, and captains, five shillings. Pay was to be allowed for but three days in each week, although a service of four hours a day was required.

The town house was now filled — as were also most of the warehouses and other buildings — with the stored goods of Boston merchants, who were suffering from the operation of the Port Bill, which had closed that harbor to their business. And owing to this, as also by reason of the greater advantage afforded for securing privacy, the townsmen now held their meetings at the old tavern on Front Street, which faced the water, thus giving a good opportunity for observing the movements of the enemy upon the Neck.

John Glover, one of the town's foremost men, and a stanch patriot, lived near here; and he was now at the head of the regiment in which were John Devereux and Hugh Knollys, — the former being

second lieutenant in the company of which Nicholson Broughton was captain, and in whose ranks Hugh was serving as a private.

Soon after his return from Boston, Broughton had closed his own house, deeming it too much exposed to the enemy for the safety of his daughter, who was compelled during his many absences to remain there alone with the servants; and Mary had gone with them to the house of a married aunt — Mistress Horton — living in a more retired portion of the town, away from the water.

He had consented, in response to the urging of his prospective son-in-law, that the wedding should take place before the winter was over. And thus it was that Mary, being busy with preparations for the event, left Dorothy much to herself, — more, perhaps, than was well for her at this particular time.

Aunt Penine had departed upon the day her brother-in-law fixed; but under Aunt Lettice's mild guidance, coupled with Tyntie's efficient rule, the household went on fully as well as before, — better, indeed, in many respects, for there was no opposing will to make discord.

The tory Jameson still remained under an unburned roof, despite the mutterings against him; and he continued to entertain the redcoats with lavish hospitality.

Several times, during trips to and from the Knollys house, Dorothy, escorted by Hugh or her brother — sometimes by both — or by old Leet, had encountered the young officer. But nothing more than a bow and smile had passed between them since the

morning he had turned so haughtily from her father's presence.

It was about the middle of the month, and the shutters of all the windows were opened wide to let in the flood of autumn sunshine as the family sat at breakfast; and the silver service in front of Aunt Lettice glinted like little winking eyes where it caught the golden flood.

Her delicate white hands had poured out the sweetened hot milk and water which she and 'Bitha drank in lieu of tea, while her brother-in-law, busy with looking over a copy of the "Salem Gazette" brought by his son the night before, was letting his coffee cool.

Jack himself, after a hastily despatched breakfast, had already gone into the town, where he had matters of importance to look after, not the least of them being to dine at the Hortons' with Mary and her father; and he would not return until late in the evening.

Dorothy had little to say, seeming to be busy with her own thoughts; but she could not help smiling as little 'Bitha murmured softly, "Oh, grandame, I am all full of glory by now, for I caught a lot of sunshine on my spoon and swallowed it."

"And you 'll be full of a mess, child, if you stir your porridge about in such reckless fashion," said Aunt Lettice, smiling as her eyes met Dorothy's.

"Dot," her father now asked suddenly, lifting his eyes from the paper, "when did you last see old Ruth Lecrow?"

Dorothy started, and her big eyes turned to him

with a troubled look as she answered, "It is all of a month since I saw her."

The girl's conscience smote her, as never before had she neglected for so long a time to go and see the faithful carer of her own motherless infancy, or else send needful provision for her impoverished old age.

"A month!" her father repeated. "How is that, my child?" Then with a searching, anxious look into her downcast face, he said more gently: "You had best take Leet, and go to Ruth this very morning. The air and sun be fine enough to bring back the roses to your cheeks. I am thinking that you stop within doors too much o' late."

Before Dorothy could reply, Aunt Lettice reminded him that Leet was to meet Jack in the town that morning.

"Then I will walk, father," the girl said, "and take Pashar."

With this she arose from the table and was about to leave the room, when 'Bitha put in a petition that she might accompany her.

"No, 'Bitha," interposed her grandmother, "you made such a froach[1] of your sampler yesterday that you have it all to do over again this morning, as you promised me." She spoke with gentle firmness, and the child hung her head in silence.

"Never mind, 'Bitha," Dorothy said soothingly, as she touched the small blonde head, — "mayhap we can have Leet take us to see Mistress Knollys this afternoon."

[1] Spoiled work.

"I'd sooner go on the water, Dot," the child suggested timidly. Then turning to the head of the house, she asked: "Cannot we go out in one of the boats, Uncle Joseph? We've not been on the water for a long time." And the blue eyes were lifted pleadingly to the old gentleman, who had just set down his emptied cup.

"Nay, my child," he answered, "that you must not; and for the same reason that none have been for so long a time. None o' ye must go nigh the boats until the redcoats be gone from the Neck."

"When will they go?" asked 'Bitha, pouting a little. "They have spoiled our good times for long past. We cannot go anywhere as we used."

"Nor can others older than you, my child," he said with an unmirthful smile, as he arose from the table. "The soldiers are a pest in the town, little one. But till the King sees fit to call them off, or we find a way to make them go, you must be content to stop nigh the house, and away from the boats." Then he added teasingly, as he put his hand upon her head, "The redcoats may carry you off, if you put yourself in their way."

'Bitha shook off his hand as she gave her small head a belligerent toss. "If they tried to do that, Uncle Joseph, I'd push them over the rocks, as Mary Broughton did that redcoat we met in the cave. And oh, Dot," — turning to her — "that 'minds me that the other day when I was with Leet and Trent, down in the ten-acre lot, that same redcoat was there, sitting in the door of the shed, with his horse standing nigh. And when he saw us coming, he hurried

away. And Trent said 't was lucky no sheep were within the shed for him to steal."

"He is a gentleman, 'Bitha, and would no more steal my father's sheep than would you or I!"

Dorothy's voice was full of indignation, and the child's eyes opened wide at its unusual sharpness. But this, as well as her heightened color, her father and Aunt Lettice ascribed to embarrassment at being reminded of her exploit of the past summer.

All the outside world lay flooded in the warm golden sunshine that blunted the cold edge of the wind rushing from the north, where sullen cloud-banks were piling up in a way to threaten a change of weather before night. The sea lay a floor of molten silver and burnished steel, and the crows called incessantly from the woods.

Dorothy chose to take a short cut across the fields to old Ruth's abode; and while skirting the ten-acre lot, she cast a furtive glance toward the large shed, as if expecting to see a scarlet coat in the doorway.

But only the homespun-clad form of Trent was there, letting out a large flock of sheep, who came gambolling about him, and then dispersed over the dry brown grass, where a bright green patch showed here and there.

"'T was queer, Mist'ess Dor'thy, dat we nebber foun' de two cows dat strayed so long 'go, don't ye t'ink?" inquired Pashar, who followed close behind her with a big basket on his arm.

Dorothy, intent upon her own affairs, did not reply, and the boy went on: "Trent say now dat he b'leebe de redcoats stole 'em, fo' sure."

"How could that be," she asked sharply, "when the cows were missing before any soldiers came down here?"

"I dunno, Mist'ess—on'y dat's what Trent say, an' what we all b'leebe."

Here Dorothy was startled by a wild, shrill yell from the boy, and turned quickly to see the cause of it. The sheep had discovered a broken place in the fence, and were trooping through it *en masse;* and if once out of the field, there was nothing to bar their way to Riverhead Beach.

Trent had already started in pursuit, but it was easy to see that many of the flock would be on the other side of the fence before he could stop them.

"Give me the basket," Dorothy said to the negro boy, "and go to help Trent. Then come to Ruth's after me."

She had scarcely spoken when he, giving her the basket, uttered another wild yell and was off, speeding after the wayward sheep. He was soon alongside Trent, who had stopped to put some bars across the opening, at which the few detained animals were now poking with eager noses. But these scattered quickly when Pashar, with renewed shouts, charged through them and vaulted the fence, to dash away on the other side with a speed that quickly carried him out of sight.

Pursuing her way alone, Dorothy soon reached the Salem road, which she crossed, climbing the stone walls on either side, and was again in a narrow strip of pasture land ending in a wood, where the stillness

was broken only by the squirrels chattering overhead as though in fear of the intruder.

The sun sent its rays here and there across the paths that led in different directions, all of them carpeted with needles from the tall pine-trees standing amid the oaks and chestnuts; and the one Dorothy pursued brought her soon to the summit of a small hill, where it took a sharp turn, and then ran directly to a small, hut-like dwelling, about the door of which grew a honeysuckle vine.

In front of the house was what in the summer had been a flower-garden; everything about it was neat, and the tiny panes of glass in the unshuttered windows were spotlessly bright.

Dorothy did not wait to knock, but opened the door, and was within the living-room of the house, there being no hall. It was wide, and low-ceilinged, with clumsy beams set upright against the walls, bedimmed with age and smoke. Directly opposite the entrance was the open hearth, back of which a sluggish fire was burning; and kneeling in front of the logs was a girl of fourteen, working with a clumsy pair of bellows to blow it into a brisker flame.

She was so engrossed in her task as not to hear the door open, but started quickly as Dorothy said, "Good-day, Abbie; how is your granny this morning?"

"Oh, Mistress Dorothy, how you scared me!" the girl cried, springing to her feet, and showing, as she turned her head, a preternaturally old and worried face.

"Where is Ruth?" inquired the smiling intruder,

who now put down the heavy basket, and began to remove her cloak, whose hood had somewhat disarranged the curls over which it was drawn.

"Granny be in bed yet, for her rheumatiz be in her legs to-day, she says. An' she was worritin' over ye, for fear ye might be ill. She was sayin' last evenin' that I was to go over and inquire."

Perfectly at home in the little house, Dorothy went straight to her old nurse's bedroom, to find her propped up in bed, knitting, and with an open Bible lying beside her on the snow-white counterpane.

"Oh, my lamb!" she exclaimed joyfully, catching sight of the sunny face, that was soon bending over her, while the dim old eyes devoured its every feature. "But I am glad to see ye, for I feared ye were ill, for sure. An' what a lot o' sweet fresh ye bring about! It must be a fine day outside. Ah," with a deep sigh, "if I could only get about as I used to, my lamb!" The old woman's voice faltered, and the moisture was showing in her eyes.

"You will be well again, Ruth, when the winter gets fairly set," Dorothy said cheerfully. "'T is the seasons changing that always make you feel poorly."

"Mayhap, mayhap," sighed the old woman. "But it seems only yesterday I was runnin' about, a girl like ye, with no thought of ache or pain; an' but another yesterday when I had ye, a little babe, in my arms. An' here I be now, a crippled, useless old body, with only a poor granddaughter, who has to do for me what I ought to be doin' for her. An' here ye be, a fine grown young woman, ready to be married."

Dorothy's laugh rang through the small room. "Not I, Ruth. I shall always live with my father. And I am sure Abbie is glad to do all she can for you." This last was with a kindly glance at the girl, who had that moment slipped into the room to see if she might be wanted for anything.

She turned to Dorothy with a gratified look on her wan face, and said with an attempt at heartiness: "Yes, Mistress Dorothy, that I am. Only she be forever frettin', like I was the worst o' granddaughters to her."

The old woman smiled at this, as she permitted the girl to raise her shoulders a little, and shake up the pillows before leaving the room.

As soon as she was gone, Dorothy said, "I brought you a basket of things I hoped you wanted; and I 'll not stop so long away from you another time."

"Aye, my lamb, but ye have stayed away a sore long time. But now that ye 're a young lady, ye 've pleasanter folk to talk to than your old nurse."

"Now, Ruth," Dorothy threatened playfully, "if you talk to me in that fashion, I 'll go straight home again."

The old eyes were turned upon her wistfully, while the knotted fingers nervously handled the knitting-needles. Then Ruth said, "Moll Pitcher was here yesterday to see me."

"Was she? What did she say?" asked Dorothy, all in the same breath; for she took the keenest interest in Moll and her talk.

"I made her talk to me o' ye, my lamb. An' I was sorry for it afterwards; for what she said kept me

wakeful most o' the night. She did not want to tell me, either; but I made her."

"But what did she say?" Dorothy repeated eagerly. "Tell me just what she said, Ruth."

The old woman hesitated, as though unwilling to reply. Then her restless fingers became quiet, and she said slowly and earnestly: "She told me that your fate was about ye now, fast an' firm, an' that no one could change it. An' she said your future days were tied about with a scarlet color."

"Oh, Ruth," Dorothy said at once, "she must mean that war is coming to us." She was entirely free from any self-consciousness, and her eyes looked with earnest surprise into the solemn old face lying back upon the pillows. But her color deepened as Ruth added still more impressively: "Nay, my lamb, she told me o' war times to come, beside. But she meant that a redcoat would steal your heart away; an' she said that naught could change it, — that his heart was set to ye as the flowers to the sunshine, — that ye held him to wind about your little finger, as I wind my wool. An' she said that sorrow, deep sorrow, would come to ye with it."

Tears were now dropping down the withered cheeks, and Dorothy thought her own were coming from sympathy with the grief of her old nurse. For a moment — only a moment — she felt frightened and almost helpless, even turning to glance quickly over her shoulder at the door of the outer room, as if to see if the redcoat were already in pursuit of her.

Then her own dauntless spirit asserted itself once more, and she laughed with joyous disbelief.

"Nonsense, Ruth, — nothing but nonsense! And don't you be fretting, and making yourself unhappy over something that can never happen."

"Moll always speaks truth, they say," the old woman insisted, wiping her wet cheeks with the half-knit stocking. "But we 'll see what time will bring to ye, my lamb. Moll is a good woman. She gave me some herbs for my ailment, an' was most kind to me. She stopped all night, an' went on this morning, for her father be dead, an' she have gone to Lynn to 'bide."

"Well, I hope she 'll stop there forever, before she comes to make you fret again over such silly tales. You must use the herbs, Ruth, and get well, so that you can dance at Jack's wedding. You know he and Mary Broughton will be married near Christmas-tide."

Ruth looked fondly at the girl. "I 'd much sooner dance at your own, my lamb, if ye married the right man."

Dorothy laughed. "Can you tell me where to find him, Ruth, — did Moll tell you where he was?"

"Aye, that she did," was the quick reply. "An' she told me much I 'd best keep to myself. Only the part I told ye worrited me, an' so I had to open my heart to ye. But I 'll tell ye this, — keep all the red-coats away from ye, my lamb; shun 'em as ye would snakes, an' trust only to the true hearts nigh home. There be Master Hugh Knollys — he be most fit for ye."

Dorothy laughed again. "Hugh Knollys," she repeated. "Why, Ruth, he is almost like my own brother. You must never speak of such a thing to

any one; for if it came to his ears I'd surely die of shame. I marry Hugh Knollys! Why, Ruth, you must be crazy."

"Ye might do far worse, my lamb." The old woman did not smile, and her lips narrowed primly, as though she did not relish having the girl make a jest of the matter lying so close to her own heart.

"Well, worse or better, I am in no hurry to be married off, Ruth; and so don't you have any such thought of me." And Dorothy shook her curly head threateningly.

CHAPTER XX

PASHAR had not yet appeared, but Dorothy set forth upon her return with no thought of danger or delay.

It was now high noon, and the sun making itself felt disagreeably, she pushed back the hood of her red cloak as she entered the wood, the cool wind coming refreshingly about her bared head while she walked slowly along with downcast eyes, musing over this last prophecy of Moll Pitcher.

"Aha, Little Red Ridinghood, have you been, or are you going, to see your grandmother?"

Dorothy's heart throbbed tumultuously for an instant. Then she felt cold and half sick, as she looked up and saw coming from under the trees the gleam of a scarlet coat, topped by a shapely head and olive face, whose dark-blue eyes were bent laughingly upon her.

She stopped, startled and hesitating, not knowing what to do, while Cornet Southorn came toward her along the path, his hat swinging from one hand, the other holding a spray of purple asters.

This he now raised to his forehead, saluting her in military fashion, as he said with a touch of good-humored mockery, "Your servant, fair mistress,— and will you accept my poor escort, to guard you from the wolf who is waiting to eat Little Red Ridinghood?"

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A smile now began to dawn about the corners of the girl's mouth; but she made an effort to keep it back, while she replied with an attempt at severity, "There are no wolves about here, sir, to guard against, save only such as wear coats of the color you have on."

"If my coat makes me anything so fearsome in your eyes, I will discard it forever." He had dropped his tone of playfulness, and now came a step closer, looking down into her face in a way to make her feel uneasy, and yet not entirely displeased.

"I have no liking," she said, in the same bantering manner he had assumed at first, "for those who so readily change the color of the coat they are in honor bound to wear."

"It was not an easy thing to contemplate until I met you," he replied bluntly, and looking at her as if hoping for some approval of his confession.

This he failed to obtain, for Dorothy only smiled incredulously as she asked, "Is it kind, think you, to credit me with so pernicious an influence over His Majesty's officers?"

"I credit you only with all that is sweetest and best in a woman," he said with quick impulsiveness. And coming still nearer to her, he dropped the flowers and seized one of her hands, while the basket fell to the ground between them.

"'T is small matter what you may or may not credit me with," she answered, with a petulant toss of her head. "Leave go my hand this minute, sir! See, you have made me drop my basket; let me pick it up, and go my way."

A sudden, curious glance now flashed from his

eyes, and looking sharply into her face, he said, "I thought that perhaps you would like me to go with you, so that you might shut me up again in your father's sheep-house."

Dorothy ceased her efforts to withdraw her hands — for he now held both of them — from his clasp, and stared up at him in affright.

"Who told you I did?" she gasped. "Who said so?"

The young man threw back his head and laughed exultingly.

"Aha, — and so it was really you, you sweet little rebel! I was almost certain of it, the morning I spoke to your father of the matter, and saw the look that came into your eyes."

"You are hateful!" she cried, her fear now giving place to anger. "Let me go, I say, — let go my hands at once!" Her eyes were filled with hot tears, and her cheeks were burning.

"Never, while you ask me in such fashion." And he tightened his clasp still more. "Listen to me!" he exclaimed passionately. "I have been eating my heart out for dreary weeks because I could see no chance to have speech with you. I felt that I could kill the men I've seen riding with you about the country. And now that I have this opportunity, I mean to make the most of it, for who can say when another will come to me?"

His words were drying her tears, as might a scorching wind; and she stood mute, with drooping head.

"Don't be angry with me for what I have said," he entreated, "nor because I found it was you who

played that trick upon me. That prank of yours is the happiest thing I have to remember. You might lock me up there every day, and I would only bless you for being close enough to me to do it."

He stopped and looked at her beseechingly. But she would not raise her eyes, and stood pushing at the spray of asters with the tip of her little buckled shoe, while she asked, "Think you I only find pleasure in going about the country to lock folk up?"

She spoke with perfect seriousness; and yet there was that in her look and manner to make his heart give a great bound.

"I think of nothing, care for nothing," he replied, almost impatiently, "save that you are the sweetest little girl I ever met."

Something in his voice made Dorothy glance up at his face, and she saw his eyes bent upon her lips with a look that startled her into a fear of what he might have in his mind to do. So, drawing herself up, she said with all the dignity she could muster, "Such speech may perchance be an English custom, sir; but 't is not such as gentlemen in our country think proper to address to a girl they may chance upon, as you have me."

"Sweet Mistress Dorothy," and he seemed to dwell lovingly upon her name, "I crave your pardon. I meant no lightness nor disrespect. And if I have lost my head, and with it my manners, you have but to look into your mirror, and you 'll surely see why."

Dorothy knew not how to reply to this bold speech, and the look that came with it. They made her angry, and yet she knew that the flush upon her

cheeks did not come from anger alone, but that a certain undefinable pleasure had much to do with it. Then came the consciousness that she had no right to be where she was, and the fear of danger coming from it. And this was sufficient to make her say with some impatience: "'T is idle to stand here prating in such fashion. Please release my hands, and let me go. I should be well on my way home by now."

He bent his head suddenly, and without a word kissed her hands. And the burning touch of his lips made her pulses thrill and her heart beat with what she knew to be delight, — exultation.

Then, like a rushing flood, reason assailed her conscience, that she should permit a hated redcoat — one whom she ought to detest — to kiss her hands, and not feel enraged at his boldness. And so, filled with indignation, she pulled one hand away, and raising it quickly, gave his face a ringing slap.

He started back and placed a hand to his cheek, now showing a more flaming color than her own, and for a moment his eyes were alight with an angry glitter. But he said nothing, and bowing low before her, stood away from the path.

Dorothy picked up her basket, and without glancing toward him passed along on her way. But her eyes were brimming with tears, which were soon trickling down her burning cheeks.

What had she done, and what could she do, in this new, strange matter, of which she might not speak to her father? How was she to act toward him from whom she had never yet withheld her confidence?

And still how could she speak to any one — even him — of what was giving birth to thoughts and feelings such as she had never dreamed of before?

With all this — and in spite of it — came the question as to what the redcoat would think of her now, — a maiden who went about at night masquerading in masculine garb, and who slapped His Majesty's officers in the face?

There came to her a woful sense of shame, — yes, of degradation, such as her young life had never imagined could exist, and seeming to overwhelm her with its possible results.

She was startled by a sudden footfall close behind her, and without looking back, she quickened her pace into a run. But now a strong arm was thrown about her waist, holding her fast; and she caught a fiery gleam of the scarlet coat against which her head was pressed by the hand that, although it trembled a little, prisoned her cheek with gentle firmness.

Then a mouth was bent close to her ear, so close that its quick breath fanned the tiny curling locks about her temples, and a voice whispered: "Sweetheart, forgive me — for God's love, forgive me! I cannot let you go in this way; for see, you are weeping. Surely this pretence of anger is unjust, — unjust to you and to me!"

Before she could speak, the voice went on, "Little rebel, sweet little rebel, will you not surrender to — a vanquished victor?" And with this, a kiss was pressed upon her lips.

At first Dorothy had been too startled to speak, — too frightened and dumb from the tumult his caress-

ing voice had aroused within her. But the touch of his lips awakened her like a blow.

"How dare you?" she cried, struggling from his arms. "Oh, how I wish I had never seen you!"

"You can scarce expect me to feel likewise," he said calmly, smiling into her stormy little face, "for I —"

"Never speak to me again!" she interrupted, still more hotly. And then, as the tears of anger choked her voice, she turned from him and fled away down the path.

For a time she heard him in pursuit; and this made her run all the swifter, until at last, reaching the Salem road, she glanced back as she mounted the low stone wall, and saw that he had stopped where the timber ended, and stood watching her. Then without turning to look again, she went quickly across the sunlit meadow-land.

Her breath came sobbingly; and mingled with her terror was a feeling she could not define, but which told her that life would never be the same for her again. She still felt the clasp of his arms about her, the burning of his lips upon her hands, — their pressure upon her mouth. His voice still came caressingly to her ears, and the wind seemed to be his breath over her hair.

It was not long before she saw Pashar coming to meet her; and drawing the hood about her face, she bade him go for the basket she had left in the wood. Then, without waiting for him to return with it, she hastened directly to her father's house.

She reached her own room without having encoun-

tered any of the household, and throwing off her cloak went to the glass. There, resting her elbows on the low, broad shelf, and dropping her soft round chin into her small palms, she seemed to be studying what the mirror showed to her, — studying it with as much interest as though she now saw the reflection of her features for the first time.

"You are a wicked, treacherous girl," she said aloud, addressing the charming face staring back at her with great solemn eyes, "a perfect little traitor." Then — but now to herself — "Moll said his heart turned toward me as the flowers to the sun. And if this be true, why is it not also truth that sorrow is to come with it?" She shivered, and pressed her hands over her eyes.

"Cousin Dot!" called a small voice outside the locked door.

"Yes, 'Bitha." Dorothy started guiltily, and made haste to dash some water over her glowing face and tell-tale eyes.

"Aunt Lettice says the meal is ready," came the announcement from without; "and Hugh Knollys is below with Uncle Joseph."

Dorothy felt thankful for this, as a guest at dinner would serve the better to divert attention from herself; and making a hasty toilette, she descended to the dining-room.

She found them all at the table, with Hugh at her father's right hand, and directly opposite her own place. The young man arose as she entered the room, and responded with his usual heartiness to the greeting she tendered him. But with it all he gave

her so odd a look as to make her wonder if he saw aught amiss in her appearance.

The two men resumed their talk of public matters and the town's doings, and were soon so absorbed that Dorothy was able to remain as silent as she could have wished.

It had been resolved not to import, either directly or indirectly, any goods from Great Britain or Ireland after the first of the coming December. And in case the tyrannical decrees of the mother country should not be repealed by the 10th of the following September, it was agreed that no commodities whatever should be exported to Great Britain, Ireland, or the British West Indies.

This would bring about an embarrassing state of affairs for both the men who were now discussing the matter, as they, like many others in the town, had derived a considerable income from such exporting.

"But we'll stand shoulder to shoulder, Hugh," said Joseph Devereux, firmly, "if so be we forfeit every penny, until the oppressors give us fair dealings or we drive every redcoat from our soil. I will kill every cow and sheep — aye, and every horse as well, and cut down every stick o' timber on my land, for the keeping of us and our friends fed and warmed, but that I will maintain the stand I've pledged myself to keep."

"Let us hope, sir, that the redcoats will not first seize your cattle," said Hugh, his eyes fixed gravely upon the abstracted young face opposite him. "I met Trent as I was riding along the pastures, and he told me the sheep had escaped through a broken

place in the fence of the ten-acre lot, and he had a chase after them to Riverhead Beach. He said he met a party of soldiers there, and they deliberately took one of the sheep from under his very nose, and carried it off with them to the Neck. And when he remonstrated with them, they only laughed at him, and told him to send the bill to the King for the dinner they would have."

The old man's eyes flashed with anger as he listened to this.

"It is an outrage!" he exclaimed when Hugh had finished, — "to steal stock under our very eyes. I must see Trent about the matter, and the cattle must be kept nigh the house."

"Why not take them by boatloads over to the islands till the redcoats be gone, as has been done before, for pasturage?" The suggestion came from Aunt Lettice, and was made rather timidly.

"You were never cut out for a farmer's wife, Lettice, my dear," her brother-in-law replied, a good-humored smile now breaking over his face, "else you'd remember there is no pasturage there at this time o' year. And I doubt if they'd be so safe on the islands as here, for Trent and the men would have to go each day with fodder for them, and the soldiers' spying eyes would be sure to note the coming and going o' the boats. No," he added with decision, "I shall have the flocks kept penned, nigh the house; and I shall make complaint o' this matter to the Governor. As for the rest," and he smiled grimly, "I take it our guns can protect ourselves and our property."

CHAPTER XXI

HUGH KNOLLYS was so much a member of the household that Aunt Lettice thought nothing of going her own way when dinner was over and leaving him in the living-room with Dorothy; and the two now sat on one of the low, broad window-seats, watching Joseph Devereux as he went out of doors in search of Trent, with 'Bitha dancing along beside him.

"How fast 'Bitha is growing!" Hugh remarked. "She will soon be taller than you, Dot. Although, to be sure," he added with a laugh, "that is not saying very much."

Dorothy did not reply. Indeed it would seem that she had not heard him; and now he laid his hand softly upon one of her own to arouse her attention as he called her by name.

At this she started, and turned her face to him.

"What, Hugh — what is it?" she asked confusedly.

His smiling face became sober at once, and a curious intentness crept into his blue eyes while he and Dorothy looked at each other without speaking. Then he asked deliberately, "Of what were you dreaming just now, Dot?"

A burning blush deepened the color in her cheeks, and her eyes fell before those that seemed to be searching her very thoughts.

"Shall I make a guess?" he said, a strange thrill now creeping into his voice and causing her to lift her eyes again. "Were you dreaming of that young redcoat you were walking with this morning?"

She sprang to her feet and faced him, her eyes blazing, and her slight form trembling with anger.

"I was not walking with any such," she replied hotly. "How dare you say so?"

"Because it so appeared as I came along the Salem road," was his calm answer. "I saw him on one side of the road leaning against the stone wall, and watching you, as you went from the wall on the opposite side, and across your father's lot. His eyes were fixed upon you as though he were never going to look away; indeed he never saw nor heard me until my horse was directly in front of him."

Dorothy was now looking down at the floor, and made no reply.

After waiting a moment for her to speak, Hugh took both her hands and held them close, while he said with an earnestness that seemed almost solemn in its intensity: "Don't deceive me, Dot. Don't tell me aught that is not true, when you can trust me to defend you and your happiness with my life, if needs be."

His words comforted her in a way she could not explain. And yet they startled her; for she was still too much of a child, and Hugh Knollys had been too long a part of her every-day life, for her to suspect how it really was with him."

"I was not intending to tell you any untruth, Hugh. But — I was not walking with him."

The anger had now gone from her eyes, and she left her hands to lie quietly in his clasp. But she had not forgotten the warm pressure of those other hands in whose keeping they had been that same morning.

"Had you not seen him, Dot?" Hugh asked, looking keenly into her face.

At this her whole nature was up in rebellion, for she could not brook his pursuing the matter farther, after what she had already told him.

"Let go my hands!" she exclaimed angrily. "Let me go! You have no right to question me as to my doings."

He dropped her hands at once, and rising to his feet, turned his back to her, and looked out of the window. A mighty flood of jealousy was surging through his brain; and that which he had so long repressed was struggling hard to uproot itself from the secret depths, — where he was striving to hide it from her knowledge — and burst forth in fierce words from his lips.

Had this hated Britisher dared to steal into the sacred place of the child's heart, which he himself, from a sense of honor, was bound to make no effort to penetrate? The mere suspicion of such a thing was maddening.

Dorothy glanced at him. How big and angry he looked, standing there with tightly folded arms, his lips compressed, and his brows contracted into a deep scowl! How unlike he was to the sunny-faced Hugh Knollys who had been her companion since childhood!

"Don't be angry with me, Hugh," she pleaded softly, venturing timidly to touch his shoulder.

He whirled about so suddenly as to startle her, and she fell back a pace, her wondering eyes staring at the set white face before her.

"I am not angry, Dot," he said, letting his arms drop from their clasping; "I am only — hurt." And he slowly resumed his place upon the window-seat.

"I don't wish to hurt you, Hugh," Dorothy declared, as she sat down by him again.

He seemed to make an effort to smile, as he asked, "Don't you?"

"No, I do not." And now her voice began to gather a little asperity. "But you do not seem to consider that you said aught to hurt me, as well."

He took her hand and stroked it gently.

"You know well, Dot," he said, "that I'd not hurt you by word or deed. And it is only when I think you are doing what is like to hurt yourself, that I make bold to speak as I did just now."

Dorothy was silent, but her brain was busy. The thought had come to her that she must bind him by some means, — make it certain that he should not speak of this matter to her brother. And a wild impulse — one she did not stop to question — urged her to see that the young soldier was not brought to any accounting for whatever he had done.

She wondered how much Hugh might know, and how much was only suspicion, — surmise. And with the intent to satisfy herself as to this, she said, "Just because you saw a redcoat watching me, as you

thought, and at a distance, you forthwith accuse me of walking with him."

She spoke with a fine show of impatience and reproof, but still permitting him to hold and caress her hand.

"Aye, Dot, but there be redcoats and redcoats. And this one happened to be that yellow-faced gallant we are forever meeting, the one you — "

She interrupted him. "I know what you mean. But I tell you truly, Hugh, I had not been walking with him, nor did I know he was by the stone wall looking after me, as you say."

"And you had not seen him?" Hugh asked, now beginning to appear more like himself, and bending his smiling face down to look at her.

But the smile vanished, as he met her faltering eyes.

"Don't tell me, Dot, if you 'd sooner not; only know that you can trust me, if you will, and I 'll never fail you, — never!"

These words, and the way they were spoken, settled all her doubts, and clasping her other hand over his, that still held her own, she burst forth impetuously: "Oh, I will tell you, Hugh. Only you 'll promise me that you 'll never tell of it, not even to Jack."

The young man hesitated, but only for a second, as the sweet prospect of a secret between them — one to be shared by no other, not even her idolized brother — swept away all other thoughts.

"I promise that I 'll tell no one, Dot, — not even Jack."

He spoke slowly and guardedly, the better to hide

the mad beating of his heart, and the effort he was making to restrain himself from taking her in his arms and telling her what she was to him.

Dorothy uttered a little sigh, as if greatly relieved. Then she said with an air of perfect frankness: "Well, Hugh, I *did* see him — up in the wood, as I was coming from old Ruth's. He spoke to me, and I ran away from him."

"What did he say?" Hugh demanded quickly.

"Oh, I cannot remember, — he startled me so. I was dreadfully frightened, although I am sure he meant no harm."

"No harm," Hugh repeated wrathfully. "It was sufficient harm for him to dare speak to you at all."

"No, but it was not," the girl declared emphatically. "He and I are acquainted, you know — after a fashion. It was not the first time he has spoken to me, nor I to him, for that matter."

Hugh's blue eyes flashed with anger.

"I have a great mind to make it the last!" he exclaimed with hot indignation, and half starting from his seat.

But Dorothy pushed him back. "Now mark this, Hugh Knollys," she said warningly, — "if you say aught to him, and so make me the subject of unseemly brawling, I'll never speak to you again, — no, not the longest day we both live!" And she brought her small clenched fist down with enforcing emphasis upon Hugh's broad palm.

"What a little spitfire you are, Dot!" And he smiled at her once more.

"Spitfire, is it? You seem to have a plentiful

supply of compliments for me this day." She spoke almost gayly, pleased as she was to have diverted him so easily.

He was now staring at her with a new expression in his eyes, and appeared to be turning over some matter in his mind; and Dorothy remained silent, wondering what it might be.

"Dorothy," he said presently, and very gravely, "I wonder will you promise me something?"

"I must know first what it is." She was smiling, and yet wishing he would not look at her in such a strange way; she had never known before that his frank, good-natured face could wear so sober an aspect.

"I wish you would promise me that you 'll keep out of this fellow's way, — that you 'll never permit him to hold any converse with you, and, above all, when no one else is by."

"I 'll promise no such thing," she answered promptly, and with a look of defiance.

"And why not?" he asked in the same grave way, and with no show of being irritated by her quick refusal. Indeed he now spoke even more gently than before.

"Because," she replied, "it is a silly thing to ask. He is a gentleman; and I do not feel bound to fly from before him like a guilty thing, or as though I were not able to take care of myself. Besides, we are not like to meet again — he and I."

Her voice sank at the last words, as though she were speaking them to herself — and it had a touch of wistfulness or of regret.

This set Hugh to scowling once more. But he said nothing, and sat toying in an abstracted fashion with her small, soft fingers.

The desire to plead his own cause was again strong upon him, and he was wondering if he might not in some way sound the depths of her feeling toward him, without violating the pledge which, although unspoken by his lips, he knew her brother — his own dearest friend — assumed to have been given.

He was aroused from these speculations by a question from Dorothy.

"You will never speak to him of me in any manner, will you, Hugh?" she asked coaxingly.

"Speak to whom?" he inquired in turn. Then, noting the embarrassment in her eyes, he muttered something — and not altogether a blessing — upon Cornet Southorn.

"But you 'll — promise me you 'll," she insisted.

"And if I promise?" he asked slowly. He was looking into her face, thinking how sweet her lips were, and wishing he could throw honor to the winds and kiss them — just once, while they were so close to his own.

"There is nothing," she declared with a sudden impulse, "that I will not do for you in return!"

"Nothing!" A reckless light was now growing in his eyes. "Are you sure, Dot, there is nothing?"

"No, nothing I can do," she affirmed. But she could not help remarking his eagerness and illy repressed excitement, and felt that she must keep her-

self on guard against a possible demonstration,— something whose nature she could not foresee.

The young man was still looking fixedly at her. But now he let go her hands and sprang to his feet.

"I'll make no bargain with you, Dot," he said excitedly. "I hate this man, and have from the very first, and I hope I'll have the good fortune before many days to meet him face to face, in fair fight. But I promise, as you ask it, that I'll seek no quarrel with him. And even had you not asked, I'd surely never have mentioned your name to him."

"Thank you." Dorothy spoke very quietly; and before he could know of her intention she snatched his hand and kissed it.

She did it so suddenly and quickly that he knew not what to say or do. He felt the hot blood rush to his face, and found himself trembling from the storm aroused within him by her caress.

Before he could speak, she was on her feet alongside him, smiling up into his burning face, and saying, "You are a good friend to me, Hugh, and I'll not forget it." Then, as she laid her hand on his arm, "Come, I will play something for you; I feel just in the humor for it."

He followed her into the drawing-room, where a huge wood-fire leaped and crackled on the hearth. She bade him be seated in a big chair in front of the dancing flames, and then went over and perched herself upon the bench — roomy enough to hold three Dorothys — before the spinet.

A moment later and there stole from beneath the skilful touch of her fingers one of those quaint melo-

dies of which we in this generation know nothing, save as they have come down to us through the ear alone, never having been put upon paper.

Hugh Knollys sat and watched her, noting the pretty curves of her cheeks and throat, — the firm white neck, so small and round, with the wayward hair breaking into rebellious little curls at the nape, — the slender wrists, and small, snowy hands.

None of these escaped him, as he sat a little back of her, his hungry eyes absorbing each charming detail. He thought what a blessed thing it would be, could she and he always be together, and alone, like this, with peace smiling once more over the land, and they happy in the society of each other.

The music seemed to fit exactly into his present mood, and he sat motionless for a time, listening to it. Then, scarcely conscious of what he was doing, he arose to his feet; and as the final cadence died softly away, he was in a chair beside the bench, with his arm clasping Dorothy's waist.

She turned a startled face, to find his own bending close to her, and with a look in it such as she had never before known it to hold.

"Dorothy," and his voice was almost a whisper, "you care more for me than for the Britisher?"

An alarmed suspicion of the truth came to her. She saw a new meaning in all he had said, in what she had beheld in his face and manner; and realizing this, she sat white and motionless, her fingers still resting upon the keys.

He now bent his head, and she was frightened to feel tears dropping on her wrist.

She was possessed by a wild desire to fly, — to get away from him. But she found herself unable to stir, and sat rigid, feeling as if turned to marble, while his arm was still lying loosely about her waist.

Then his hand stole up, and his fingers clasped her hand.

"Oh, my God," — his voice was hoarse and choked — "I cannot endure it!"

At this, there came to the girl a flash of remembrance from that same morning. She seemed to feel the arm of the young soldier around her, and to see the scarlet-clad breast against which her head was pressed so tenderly. A feeling as of treacherous dealing with his faith and with her own rushed upon her, and she struggled to get away.

"Are you gone daft, Hugh Knollys," she cried angrily, "or whatever ails you?"

He arose shamefacedly, and stood mute. But as she moved off, he stretched out a hand to detain her.

"Wait, — wait but a moment, Dot," he begged. "Don't leave me in such fashion. Don't be angry with me."

"Are you mad?" she demanded again, and with no less impatience, although pausing beside him.

"Aye, I think I must be," he admitted, now speaking more naturally, and trying to smile down into the small face, still glowing with indignation, so far beneath his own.

"So it would seem," she said coldly, and in no wise softened. "I ne'er expected such a thing from you."

"Never mind, Dot, — forget it," he pleaded, now

full of penitence. "I've a great trouble on my mind just now, and your music seemed to bring it all to me with a new rushing."

Dorothy's face changed in a second, and became filled with sympathy.

"Oh, Hugh, I am so sorry," she said with quick solicitude, taking him by the hand. "Don't you want to tell me about it? Mayhap I can help you." Her anxiety about this unknown trouble had lulled to sleeping her suspicions as to the reason for his outbreak.

He smiled, — but sadly, grimly. "I'll tell you some day," he said, "and we will see if you can help me. But we'll be better friends than ever after this, won't we, Dot?" His eyes had been searching her face in nervous wonder, as if to assure himself that he had not told her aught of his secret, — the secret his honor forbade him to reveal.

"Yes, Hugh, I am sure we shall be." Dorothy said it with a warmth that set his mind at rest.

"And you'll let no redcoats, nor any coats — whate'er be their color — come betwixt us?" he added, with a touch of his old playfulness.

"No, never!" And there was a sincerity and firmness in her answer that warmed his very heart.

"Thank you, Dot," he said, lifting her fingers to his lips. "And thank God!" he muttered as he released her hand, saying it in a way to make Dorothy feel uncomfortable in the thought that perhaps she had pledged herself to something more than she had intended.

Just here Aunt Lettice came into the room. "Leet has returned from the town," she announced, full of excitement, "and says that Mugford's wife has at last prevailed upon the English officers to release him."

"Can this be true?" inquired the young man, instantly alert, and quite his natural self again.

"So Leet says; and that Mugford is now in the town, with every one rejoicing over him." And she poked the fire with great energy, sending a thousand sparkles of flame dancing up the wide chimney.

"How happy his poor wife must be!" was Dorothy's comment, as she stooped to pick up 'Bitha's kitten, which had followed Aunt Lettice, and was now darting at the steel buckles on the girl's shoes, where the bright fire was reflected in flickerings most inviting to kittenish eyes and gambols.

"I think I'll ride over to town and see Mugford," said Hugh. "I want to congratulate him upon his escape."

He glanced at Dorothy, as if half expecting her to speak, as he had just declined Aunt Lettice's urgent invitation that he return for supper, saying that his mother was looking for him before evening.

But all Dorothy said was, "Here come father and 'Bitha." And she walked over toward the window.

Hugh followed her, and said in a low voice, not meant for Aunt Lettice's ears, "You'll not forget our compact, Dot, and your promise?"

"No," she answered, smiling at him; "nor will you yours?"

"Never!" He pressed the hand she extended to him, and then hurried away.

Joseph Devereux met him on the porch, and they stood talking for a few minutes, while 'Bitha came within, her cheeks ruddy from the nipping air.

"Leet is back," she said, as she entered the drawing-room; "but Uncle Joseph says it is too cold for us to take so late a ride over to see Mistress Knollys."

"So it is, 'Bitha," Dorothy assented. "But we 'll go to the kitchen, and ask Tyntie to let us make some molasses pull."

She was, for the moment, a child again, with all perplexing thoughts of redcoats and Hugh Knollys banished from her mind.

CHAPTER XXII

ALL the outdoor world seemed encased in burnished silver, as the new moon of early December came up from the black bed of the ocean's far-out rim, and mounting high and higher in the pale flush yet lingering from the gorgeous sunset, brought out sparklings from the snow drifted over the fields and fences of the old town.

The roads were transformed into pavements of glittering mosaics and pellucid crystals; and all about the Devereux house the meadow lands stretched away like a shining sea whose waves had suddenly congealed, catching and holding jewels in their white depths.

Dorothy was looking out at the beauty of it all, her face close to the pane her warm breath dimmed now and then, compelling her to raise a small hand to make it clear again for her vision.

It was her brother's wedding night. And the girl was very fair and sweet to look upon, in her soft pink gown, with its dainty laces and ribbons, as she stood there awaiting the others; for they were all to drive into town, to the house of Mistress Horton, where the marriage was to be celebrated.

Nicholson Broughton was away from his home, enforced to tarry near Cambridge, where several of his townsmen were holding weighty conclaves which

it was important for him to attend. But he had urged John Devereux to make no delay in the ceremony, feeling that his daughter, once wedded, and an established member of the family at the Devereux farm, would be happier, as well as safer, now that riots in the town were becoming more frequent and fierce.

Hugh Knollys also was absent, having undertaken an important mission in the neighborhood of Boston.

Only the young man himself knew how eagerly he had desired to be given this responsibility, as a reason for being away. For as the time drew near for his friend's wedding, he feared to trust his self-control should he find himself again in Dorothy's presence.

And then, besides, the hated redcoats were still on the Neck, and several of the officers, among them Cornet Southorn, having accepted more comfortable quarters at Jameson's house, Hugh thought it the wiser course to remove himself from the vicinity for a time.

It seemed as though these two young men were continually meeting one another on the roads and byways of the town and its neighborhood. And the sight of the stalwart form dashing along upon a spirited horse, — of the handsome face and reckless eyes, raised in Hugh a fierce desire to lay them in the dust through the medium of an enforced quarrel.

Dorothy had been by Hugh's side at several of these encounters; and it had made him heartsick to see the fluttered way in which her eyes would turn

from the young Britisher after meeting his ardent gaze, and how for a time she would be uneasy and abstracted, resisting all attempts to gain her attention.

But he bravely held his own counsel, and since that memorable day in October had never mentioned the Englishman's name, nor made any allusion to him or his doings.

As for Dorothy, she had gone about all these days with a face grave almost to sadness; and it was well for her own peace that the others of the family ascribed her altered mien to jealousy, thinking that her exacting heart found it a hard matter to share her adored brother with another whom he reckoned more precious than her own spoiled self.

Her musings were now disturbed by Jack coming into the room.

He looked the brave soldier in his new regimentals, — a round jacket and breeches of blue cloth, with trimmings of leather buttons; and his dark handsome face was aglow with happiness.

His curling locks were gathered at the back of the neck, and tied with a black watered-silk ribbon; and in his hand was a broad-brimmed hat, caught up on one side, as was the fashion, and adorned with a cockade of blue ribbons belonging to his sweetheart.

"Ah, Dot, and so you are here! Leet is at the door, child, and Aunt Lettice and 'Bitha are with father, in the drawing-room, all ready to start. Come, get your cloak, and let us be off."

He was close beside her as she turned from the window; and thinking he saw the sparkle of tears in her eyes, he laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"You must be happy to-night, Dot," he said, "for my sake. I should like all the world to be so, and you, my little sister, more than all the rest."

She let him kiss her on the cheek, but stood silent, with lowered eyes.

"What is it, child, — don't you rejoice with me, when I am happier than ever before in my life?"

He gently took her chin in his hand and raised her downcast face. In an instant her arms were clasped about his neck and her head buried against his breast.

Just then they heard Aunt Lettice, in the hall, calling as if she supposed Dorothy to be above stairs.

"Come, Dot," urged her brother, — "they are waiting for us, and we must be off." And kissing her, he quietly unclasped her clinging arms.

At this she drew herself away from him, and fixing her eyes searchingly upon his face, said, "You are so happy, Jack, aren't you, because you and Mary love each other?"

"Why, surely," he replied, wondering at the words, and at her way of speaking them. But he smiled as he looked into her troubled face.

"Do you not think, Jack," she asked, still with that strange look in her eyes, "that when love comes in, it changes all of one's world?"

He now laughed outright. But she paid no attention to his gayety, going on in a way to have troubled him had he been less selfishly happy at the moment, "If you know this so well, Jack, you will never cease to love me, if ever love comes to change my own

world, the same as it has yours? No matter what you may feel is wrong about it, you will not blame me?"

"Why, Dot, little girl, whatever are you dreaming about, — what should make you talk in this way?" And he looked at her with real anxiety.

But she only laughed, and passing her hand across her eyes, answered nervously, "I don't know, Jack, — I was but thinking on future possibilities."

"Rather upon the most remote impossibilities," he said laughingly. "But come, child, think no more of anything but this, — that 't is high time for you to put on your cloak and come to see your brother take unto himself a wife, who is to be your own dear sister."

"I am glad it is Mary Broughton," Dorothy said quietly, as she took her cloak from a chair.

"So am I," he laughed, as he wrapped the warm garment about her, shutting away all her pink sweetness with its heavy folds. Then, while he helped her to draw the hood over her curly head, "What if it were Polly Chine, now?"

"Then," she answered with an odd smile, "you would have to fight Hugh Knollys."

They were passing through the door, and he said with a keen glance at her, "I 've good cause to know better than that, Dot."

But she gave no heed to this, and they joined the others outside.

The old family sleigh moved sedately along the hard, snow-packed road, the moon making a shadowy, grotesque mass of it along the high drifts, while Leet,

enveloped in furs, sat soberly erect, full of the importance now attaching to him.

When they were well on their way, a body of mounted Britishers swept by, evidently bound for the town; and Joseph Devereux remarked to his son, as the two sat opposite one another, while Dorothy, riding backwards with her brother, seemed lost in the contemplation of the snowy fields they were passing, "I trust, Jack, those fellows will stir up no trouble this night."

"They are most likely to do so," was the low-spoken reply; "for you know the mere sight of their red coats acts upon our men much as the like color affects an angry bull."

"I wish they might be ordered from the Neck," observed Aunt Lettice, who sat alongside her brother-in-law, and had caught enough to guess at the rest of the talk.

"They must wish so themselves, by this time," Jack said with a laugh. "It must now be rarely cold quarters for them over there."

"Why did you not ask them to your wedding, Cousin Jack?"

The question came from small 'Bitha, who was sitting between Dorothy and her brother. "I wonder if the one Mary pushed over the rocks last summer would not like to see her married?"

"'Bitha!" Dorothy exclaimed sharply, seeming to awaken to what was being said. "Why will you always put it so? Mary did not push him over; he fell himself."

"Aye, — but, Cousin Dot, he fell over while he

was stepping back from her," the child answered. "She looked so angry that I think he was sorely frightened."

Dorothy did not reply; but her brother said gayly, "Well, 'Bitha, I hope Mary will never look at me in a way to frighten me so much as that."

"She never would," 'Bitha asserted with confidence, "for you are not a Britisher."

"What a stanch little rebel it is," Joseph Devereux said laughingly; and Jack went on in a teasing way to 'Bitha, "I expect we shall all go to see 'Bitha married to a redcoat as soon as she is big enough."

"You will see no such thing, Cousin Jack," the child replied angrily. "I 'd run away, so that no one could ever find me, before I 'd do such a thing. Would not you, Cousin Dorothy?"

Dorothy did not answer, and 'Bitha repeated the question.

"Would I do what, 'Bitha?" Dorothy now asked, but indifferently, and as though with the object of quieting the child.

"Why, marry a redcoat?"

"Nonsense, 'Bitha, — don't let Jack tease you." And Dorothy turned away again to look off over the snow fields through which they were passing. But she wondered if the others noticed how oddly her voice sounded, and what a tremble there was in it.

The Horton house loomed up full of importance from amid its darker fellows, and warm lights twinkled out here and there where a parted curtain let them through to shine forth like welcoming smiles into the cold night.

Within there was much bustle and good-natured badinage, as the neighbors, bidden to the feast, assisted the people of the house, — playing the part of entertainer or caterer, hairdresser or maid, as the needs of the other guests demanded.

It was a simple, homely wedding, as was the custom of the day; and the festivities were enjoyed with all the more zest by reason of the relief they offered from the anxiety felt by all, on account of the disturbed condition of public affairs.

There were games — such as "Twirl the Trencher" and "Hunt the Slipper" — for those who liked them; and the elders endeavored to enter at least into the spirit of all that was going on, and not dampen the younger folks' pleasure by the exhibition of gloomy faces and constrained actions.

Later in the evening there was dancing. And it was a goodly sight to look at the handsome groom and his lovely bride go through the stately minuet, with his father and Aunt Lettice opposite them, — the slow, dignified step making the feat a no-wise difficult one for the old gentleman, who had in his day been accounted one of the most graceful of dancers.

Dorothy acted for a time as though she were made of quicksilver. She was leader in all the games and frolics, and seemed the very impersonation of happy, laughter-loving girlhood. Then, and without any apparent reason, another and different mood took possession of her, and she suddenly became very quiet, taking but little part in what was going on.

Her father's fond eyes were quick to notice this;

but when he hastened to draw her to one side and ask for the cause, she made light of his anxiety, and gave him a smiling assurance of her perfect well-being.

As a matter of fact, something had occurred to disturb the girl very seriously.

During one of the games she had been alone for a few minutes in a room facing upon the side yard, — a small orchard; and chancing to glance toward the window, she saw, as if pressed against the glass, the face of Cornet Southorn.

While she stood, silent and rigid, staring at it, the face disappeared; and some of the other guests now entering the room, she slipped away to recover her composure.

What, she asked herself, did he seek, and why was he here? She dismissed at once the thought of his meaning any harm, for surely he would not bring about any disturbance upon this, her brother's wedding night. And even should he seek to intrude himself upon them, there could be no just cause to warrant such an act, for although the King might expect to enforce the Acts of his Parliament, he had not as yet sought to control the marrying or giving in marriage of his American subjects.

But even so, she was startled, almost alarmed; and the matter filled her thoughts for the remainder of the evening.

It had been arranged that Aunt Lettice and 'Bitha were to remain with the Hortons for a time, while Joseph Devereux was to accept the invitation of his friend, Colonel Lee, to pass a few days at the latter's house, not far away.

This would make the bride and groom the only ones who would return with Leet to the farm, as Dorothy was going to the home of a girl friend, feeling that it would be a relief to be among new faces and in a strange house.

"Dorothy, are you going to let me be a good sister to you, — one of the sort you will come to with all your joys and troubles?"

The two girls were standing close to each other in one of the upper rooms, where Mary was donning a dark gray slip pelisse and hood, with warm fur linings peeping about the edges, while Mistress Horton was bustling about out of earshot, getting some last stray articles bundled for their conveyance to the sleigh waiting below.

The earnest blue eyes were bent searchingly upon Dorothy's face, as if the speaker had more than a passing notion of the impulses stirring the heart lying beneath the laces of the dainty pink gown.

But Dorothy laughed, albeit a little constrainedly, and replied, "I thought you knew all about that long ago, Mary."

"Do you know, Dot," — and Mary's white brows contracted into a puzzled frown — "somehow you are changed. What is it, dear?"

"Your imaginings, I should say," was the careless reply. "My hair is not turning gray, is it?" And she touched her dark curls.

"Well, never mind now," said Mary, diplomatically, and not caring to press the matter, "but you will tell me when we are together again, won't you, Dot?"

Dorothy only smiled, and said nothing.

Jack had spoken to Mary more than once of some change that had come over his sister. But his words were not needed, as she herself, not having seen much of the girl these last few months, would have observed it had he not spoken.

Dorothy was as impulsive and affectionate as of old, but to Mary's keen eyes there now seemed a new-born womanliness about her. She was sensible of the absence of that childish frankness and ingenuousness which had been so much a part of the girl's nature. She was now more like a woman, and one whose mind held a secret she herself tried to evade, as well as have others blind to its existence.

It was as if a new self had been born, dominating the old self, and sending her thoughts far from where her body might be.

"She must be in love with some one, and 't is sure to be Hugh Knollys," said Mary to herself, with a glow of happiness, as the two went downstairs, Mistress Horton and a servant following them, both laden with packages to be stowed away in the Devereux equipage, whereon Leet sat rigidly upright, the darkness hiding his black face and its unusual grin.

"Take good care of her, Strings," Joseph Devereux cautioned, as he took his place within the vehicle, and pointing to the open doorway, where a pink gown and dark curly head showed foremost amongst the guests crowded there to see the bride and groom on their way. The pedler — an humble onlooker at the wedding — had urged his protection for Dorothy's safer piloting through the town to her

friend's house; and this her father and brother had been glad to accept.

"That I will, sir, — never fear," was the hearty response; and as Jack Devereux sprang into the sleigh, Leet turned the horses' heads to the street and drove off, followed by a shower of old shoes and peals of merry laughter from the doorway.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE town was as silent as a city of the dead when the four started on their way, Master Storms — a fussy, irritable old gentleman — in advance, with his pretty daughter Patience hanging on his arm, and followed closely by the small erect figure of Dorothy, wrapped in her dark cloak; while Johnnie Strings, on guard against any unseen danger, walked directly behind her.

There were hurrying masses of cloud overhead that made gorges and ravines, hemming in the glittering stars, now grown brighter since the moon had set; and the sound of the sea came faintly hoarse, as the little party bent their steps in its direction. For near it lay the Storms domicile, — up near what was known as "Idler's Hill."

Suddenly a wild uproar broke out upon the night, coming from ahead of them; and Master Storms bringing his daughter to a halt, Dorothy and the pedler came up with them.

They all stood listening. There were the shouts and cries of a not-to-be-mistaken street fight; and the turmoil was becoming more distinct, as though the combatants were approaching.

Patience urged her father to hurry on towards their house; but he hesitated.

"What think you is amiss, Johnnie Strings?" he inquired nervously, fidgeting from one foot to the

other, while his terrified daughter tugged at his arm.

"Usual trouble, I guess," drawled the pedler. "Redcoats paradin' the streets, and gettin' sassy." Then turning to Dorothy, he said, "Had n't ye best let me take ye back, Mistress Dorothy?"

Before she could answer him a small body of soldiers issued from a side street near by. A wavering, yelling crowd of angered men swept forward to meet them; and the two girls and their escorts found themselves in the midst of a struggling, shouting mass, with here and there a horseman looming up, whose headgear, faintly outlined in the uncertain light, proved him to be a British dragoon.

Master Storms seized his daughter by the arm, and taking advantage of an opening he saw in the crowd, darted through and sped with the girl down a narrow alley. But the pedler, trying to follow with Dorothy, was baffled by a number of the combatants closing in around them.

He shouted lustily for them to make a passage for himself and his charge; but although he was known to many of them, rage, and the lust of battle, seemed to dull their ears to his voice.

In the midst of it all he was felled to the ground; and with no thought of tarrying to find out if he were hurt, Dorothy, seeing a small opening in the mass of men, dashed through it, with the intention of making her way back to the Hortons'.

She had gone only a short distance when her path was barred by several horsemen, who seemed to be the leaders of the troop. They had fought their way

to a clearer space, and were looking back as though for their followers to join them.

"Devils — fools," panted one. "They deserve to be wiped out."

"Aye," said another. "If we might use our weapons as we liked, I, for one, would take pleasure in having a hand at that game."

Dorothy attempted to glide by them, hoping that the dark color of the cloak she wore would save her from detection. But the voice of the first speaker called out gayly, "Aha, who goes there? Stop, pretty one, and give the countersign."

"Or, if indeed you be a pretty one, we'll take a kiss instead, and call it a fair deal," laughed another, as flippantly as if the night were not being rent with the uproar of the fighting mob just behind them.

Dorothy came to a standstill, and for the instant was uncertain which way to turn. Then she resolved to pursue the road she had taken, and said spiritedly, "Stand aside, and let me pass out of hearing of such insults, or it may be the worse for you."

She lifted her head as she spoke; and as the rays of a near-by lamp fell upon her face, one of the riders spurred toward her.

"Mistress Dorothy!" The voice made her heart leap; and then she felt sick and faint.

"Dear mistress," — and now Cornet Southorn had dismounted close beside her — "let me conduct you safely out of this place, where you surely never should have come."

The other horsemen had drawn to one side and away from them, and were now silent.

Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, Dorothy permitted him to lift her to his saddle. He sprang up behind her, and holding her firmly with one arm about her waist, spurred his horse away from the scene, shouting to the others not to wait for him.

The uproar soon died away behind them, but still they sped on in silence. Then Dorothy heard the young man laugh, and in a way to frighten her, and rally her dreaming senses to instant alertness.

"So now, my sweet little rebel, you are my captive, instead of being my jailer, as that night in the summer." And she felt his breath touch her cheek.

"You shall not speak to me in such fashion. And — oh, you have passed the street leading to Mistress Horton's, which is where I must go."

Dorothy began with her usual imperiousness, but ended in affright as she saw the street fade into the darkness behind them.

"Is that where I stole like a thief to catch one glimpse of you, pretty one?" he asked, paying no heed to her indignation. "And I felt like committing murder, when I saw all the gallants who wanted your smiles for themselves."

"Take me back this minute!" she demanded angrily; but her heart was now thrilling with something that was not altogether rage nor fright.

"That will I not," he answered quickly, and with dogged firmness.

"You are no gentleman," she cried, beginning at last to feel real alarm, "if you do not take me to Mistress Horton's this minute."

The young man leaned forward until his lips were

close to the girl's ear; and his deep voice, now trembling as with suppressed feeling, sent each word to her with perfect distinctness.

"I hope, sweet Mistress Dorothy, I am a gentleman," he said. "As such I was born, and have been accounted. But" — and his voice sank to a tremulous softness — "take you anywhere, I will not, until we have seen good Master Weeks, for whose house we are now bound. And when we leave it, it will be as man and wife."

"You — dare not," she gasped. "You dare not do such a thing."

He laughed softly. "Dare I not? Ah, but you mistake. I dare do anything to win you for my own. I know your sweet rebel heart better than you think, and I know that except it be done in some such manner, you may never be mine."

She tried to speak, but fright and dismay sealed her lips. Suddenly he bent his face still closer and whispered: "Ah, little sweetheart, how I long to kiss you! But my rose has its thorns; and I fear their stinging my face, as they did that day in the wood, ages ago, — so long it seems since I had the happy chance to hold speech with you."

Still Dorothy could not utter a word, seeming to be in a dream, while the powerful gray flew along the deserted streets that somehow looked new and strange to her eyes. And now she felt the broad breast pillowing her head, and she could feel distinctly the beating of his heart, as if his pulse and her own were one and the same.

And so they rode along in silence until they

reached the house of Master Weeks, where the young man pulled up his horse, and without dismounting, pounded fiercely with his sword-hilt upon the door.

An upper window was soon raised, and a man's querulous voice demanded to know what was wanted.

"Make haste, and come down to see," was the impatient answer. "It is Cornet Southorn who wishes to speak with you."

The window was closed hastily, and a light soon flickered in the lower part of the house; and then came the noise of the door being unbarred.

The young man sprang to the ground and held out his arms.

"Come, sweetheart," he said, "let me lift you down, and I will fasten the horse to a ring in the step here. He has been fastened there before, but," with a soft laugh, "scarce for a like purpose."

Dorothy clung to the pommel. "I'll not,—I'll not!" she declared. "You shall not dare do so wicked a thing, and Master Weeks will never dare listen to you."

"We'll see to that," he laughed, and lifted her from the saddle. Then, as she reached the ground, he kissed her, as he had that day in the wood.

"Be good to me, and true to yourself, my sweet little rebel," he whispered, "and fight no longer with truth and your own heart. Own that you love me, and know that I love you,—aye, better than my life."

"I care naught for your love," cried Dorothy, struggling to free herself from his arms. "And I tell you that I hate you!"

"Aye," and he laughed again, "so your lips say. But I know what your heart says, for your eyes told me that, long ago. And I shall listen to your heart and eyes, and pay no heed to your sweet little rebellious mouth."

They were now standing on the upper step of the small porch, and in the open doorway was the minister, Master Weeks, a candle in his hand, and held above his head as he peered out into the darkness with wonder filling his blinking eyes.

"Good Master Weeks, here is a little wedding party. And despite the unseemly hour, you must out with your book, and your clerk, as witness, for binding the bargain past all breaking."

With this, the young officer, carrying Dorothy in before him, entered the house and closed the door, against which he placed his broad back, his gleaming teeth and laughing eyes alight like a roguish boy's as he smiled down upon the bewildered little divine.

"You will do no such thing, Master Weeks," Dorothy protested, her eyes flashing with anger. "I am here against my will, and forbid you to listen to his madness."

"Aye," the young man said, looking into her glowing face, "mad I am, and with a disease that naught will cure but to know that you are my wife."

"Why, Cornet Southorn," exclaimed Master Weeks, "whatever can you be thinking on? Surely this lady is Mistress Dorothy, the daughter of Master Joseph Devereux." And he looked closely into her face.

"Yes, so I am," she cried, moving nearer to him.

"You know my father, and you 'll surely not hearken to this young Britisher?"

"Aye, but he will, and that speedily," the young man asserted. The smile was now gone from his face, and his hand stole toward his pistol.

"Master Weeks," he said sternly, "it will go hard with you if within ten minutes you do not make this lady my wife." And he looked at his watch.

The frightened little man said nothing more, but hurriedly summoned his housekeeper and her son, who was also his clerk. A few minutes later, and Dorothy, held so firmly — albeit gently — by Kyrle Southorn that she could not move from his side, heard the words that made her his wife.

When it was over, she was strangely silent, scarcely seeming to comprehend what had taken place.

The newly made husband put his name upon the register. Then, as he drew Dorothy forward to take his place, he bent down until his face came beneath her own, and gave her a curious, beseeching look, — one that seemed to act upon her bewildered senses like a deadening drug.

Yes, he was right. She loved him better than all else in the world. Her mind had fought the truth these many months; but now her heart rose up, a giant in strength and might, and she could never question it again.

For a moment her great dark eyes looked down into his pleading ones. Then in a subdued, obedient way, entirely unlike the wilful Dorothy of all her former life, she took the pen he proffered and wrote her name underneath his bold signature.

A deep sigh now burst from his lips, — one of happy relief; then, as if utterly unmindful of the minister's presence, he pressed a kiss upon the little hand that still held the pen.

She submitted to this in silence, standing before him with downcast face, and eyes that seemed fearing to meet his gaze, while he carefully drew the cloak about her once more.

"I trust, Mistress Dorothy, you will in no wise hold me accountable for this young man's rashness, when the matter shall come to your father's ears, but that you will kindly raise your voice in my behalf to testify how that I was forced for my life's sake to agree."

Master Weeks was already on the black list, owing to his well-known sympathy for the King's cause, and for having remonstrated openly with the patriots of his congregation.

"You have but to keep a close mouth, Master Weeks," said Southorn, as the little man lighted them into the hall; "and the closer, the safer it will be for your own welfare, until such time as one of us shall call upon you to speak."

A few minutes later they were again speeding along, with everything about them as silent as the stars now glittering in an unclouded sky.

The touch of the keen air upon Dorothy's face seemed to arouse her; and as her senses became awakened, she was filled with a wild yearning for the safe shelter of her father's arms.

What would that father say, — how was she ever to tell him of this dreadful thing?

And yet was it sure to be so dreadful to her?

Yes, it must be. This man was the sworn enemy of her country, and of the cause for which her brother and her friends were imperilling their very lives. If she went with him — this Englishman who was now her husband — it meant that her family would brand her as a traitor, and that she would be an outcast from them. It might bring about the death of her father, the light of whose eyes and life she knew herself to be.

She seemed to see once more the beloved face, and hear his voice, warning the pedler to take care of her.

And poor Johnnie Strings — might he not at this moment be dead, stricken down by the followers of this very man who was now holding her so close to his breast, and murmuring fond words between the kisses he pressed upon her lips.

She was beset by a sudden loathing of him and of herself, and pushing away his bended face, she tried to sit more erect.

"Stop!" she cried fiercely. "Don't touch me. I did not mean to give way so. I detest you!"

"Ah, my little rebel," — and he spoke in no pleased tone, — "have I to fight the battle all over?"

"You have taken an unfair, a dishonorable advantage of me," she said. "I am not used to such manners as you have shown. But I tell you this, — although you have forced me to become your wife, you cannot force my love."

"So it would seem," was his grim answer.

"Where do you purpose taking me?" she demanded, all her wits now well in hand.

"That shall be just as you say, sweet mistress," he replied, so good-naturedly as to surprise her.

"Then take me at once to my father's house," she ordered, with her natural imperiousness.

"So be it," he said. "And that will be on my own way, as it leads to Jameson's."

They rode in silence along the snowy road, whose whiteness and the stars made the only light, until they were within her father's grounds, and partially up the driveway.

Here she bade him let her down; and he dismounted silently and lifted her from the horse, detaining her as she stood alongside him, as in her heart she had hoped he would. And yet had he not done this, she would have gone her way without a word.

"Is there any doubt but that you will get within the house all safe?" he asked anxiously.

"None." She lifted her face, and he wished there were a better light with which to see her.

"And now," he said, "what is your will that I do?"

Dorothy answered quickly and with angry decision.

"Go away and leave me," she exclaimed, "and never speak to me again!"

She could not see the look of pain come to his face. But he still lingered beside her, and asked again, "And you are certain to get within the house, and that you fear naught?"

"I fear nothing!" she said impatiently.

"Aye, — I should have cause to know better than ask such a question," he declared, in a voice that

sounded as if now he might be smiling. Then he asked, "And you mean it, — that I leave you, and keep away?"

"Yes, yes; let me go." And she sought to escape from his grasp.

But he held her firmly, and still closer.

"Do you realize, sweet mistress, that you are my wife, — my own little wife?"

She did not reply; and bending his head nearer, he exclaimed passionately: "My own wife you are, and no man can change that, — never, never! And now, having gained you, I am content to await your pleasure. My lips shall be sealed until you choose to open them; and until you send for me, sweet mistress of my heart, I shall not come nigh you. Only, I pray you, in God's name, not to let the time be far away."

"Let me go," was all she could say, dismayed as she was by the weight of sorrow that had come to her, and threatened those whom she loved.

He released her without another word, and she fled swiftly to the house.

Having awakened Tyntie by tossing some bits of ice against her window, she soon gained entrance, and quieted the wonder of the faithful servant by telling her that there had been a street fight, and a gentleman had brought her home on his horse.

Despite the terrible struggle going on in her childish heart, Dorothy kept up bravely until alone in her own room, whose very familiarity seemed almost a shock to her, for all that had been crowded into these few hours made it as though weeks had passed since

she arrayed herself for her brother's wedding, — little dreaming that it was for her own as well.

And such a wedding! How was it that the young Britisher had dared to do such a thing? How was it that she had come to sign the register so meekly? How could she ever dare tell of it? And if she did so, might not her revelation bring harm to him?

Such were the questions that chased one another through her mind, only to return again and again with renewed importunity.

She had told him to go, and yet — she loved him truly. And could she be loyal to her father's cause with such a love battling in her heart?

With thoughts like these the few remaining hours of the night wore away, bringing to her but snatches of fitful sleep.

Johnnie Strings appeared at the Devereux farm early the following morning. The red of his face was almost pale, and he was haggard and wild-eyed, with one of his arms in a sling.

He came to report to John Devereux the happenings of the night before, and to consult with him as to the best way of imparting to his father the news of Dorothy's disappearance.

The newly wedded pair had already been told by Tyntie of the girl's presence in the house; and Jack now hastened to assure the almost distracted pedler of her safety, adding that they had thought it best to leave her sleeping undisturbed until she should be ready to come down and join them.

When Johnnie Strings heard this, he collapsed into a chair.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, as soon as he could find his voice, "I never was so dead beat out! My broken arm is pretty bad, to be sure, but my feelin's was a danged sight worse when I come to my senses last night. There they had me in fisher Doak's, an' naught could they tell o' Mistress Dorothy, for none had seen her. I went down to Storms's at daybreak, and then over to Horton's, an' she 'd been seen at neither place. Comin' by Master Lee's, I first thought to make inquiry there, thinkin', ye know, she might o' flewed to her father. Then, thinks I, 'Hold on, Strings. If she did, then she 's safe as safe; an' if she did n't, why, ye may be the death o' the old gentleman.'

"So thinkin', I rode back to Horton's ag'in an' begged 'em — an' Mistress Lettice, who was about plum out o' her head with fright — to keep quiet, an' not risk scarin' your father to death, while I rode out here to see ye an' have a sort o' meetin' over it, to decide what 's to be done next an' best. So now, thank the Lord, I find the bird is safe here in the nest where she b'longs, an' I 'll hurry back an' tell Mistress Lettice, as I promised to do."

With this he pulled himself up from the chair and started for the door. But the young man stopped him.

"You had better stop here awhile, Strings," he said, "and have something to eat and drink; I can send Leet in to see Aunt Lettice." And Mary adding her persuasions, the worn-out pedler was induced to accept the invitation.

Tyntie soon had a tempting meal spread for him;

and having been without food since leaving the Horton house the night before, he was in a condition to do it full justice.

John Devereux sat by while the pedler ate, and drew from him the details of the disturbance.

It had been brought about by a party of the Britishers being requested to depart from a tavern kept by one Garvin, where they were eating and drinking until a late hour. A wrangle ensued, during which one of the dragoons knocked Garvin down, and then the latter's son had retaliated in kind.

At this, some of the other guests — townsmen — had joined in, and a regular fight began, spreading soon from the inn to the street, where, aroused by the noise, others had taken part, although scarcely knowing why, except for the reason that here were some of the hated enemy, and they must be made to retreat.

No one had been killed outright, although several were quite badly hurt.

"The queerest part of it is, sir," said the pedler, having finished his story, "that I 've a firm belief 't was none other than David Prentiss who broke my arm for me. Somethin' must o' turned him blind, I should say, for him to see a red coat on *me*."

"That is the trouble with these street fights, and especially at night, — the men seem to lose all sense of sight and reason. Something has got to be done to make the Governor remove the troops from the Neck." While speaking, John Devereux rose from his chair, and paced up and down the room in angry excitement.

"Aye, very true, sir," Johnnie assented, as he drained the last drop of spirits from his glass. "But however will such a thing be brought about?"

"I don't know," was the impatient reply. "But it must and shall be brought about, if we have to rise up and drive them out by main force, and at the risk of turning our very streets into a battle-ground. And this is the only thing that has kept us from doing it long ago. But their insulting tyranny only grows worse, and they seek deliberately to stir up the people to rash actions; and these, when reported, serve but to hurt the real cause of our revolting, when tidings of them comes to the King's hearing."

"Aye, no doubt," the pedler agreed, as he arose from the table. "Now, if His Majesty could be got to sit down, comfort'ble, like another man might, an' listen to all we could tell him, he might agree to let us have what we want, an' what is only fair we should have, an' no fightin' need be done o'er the matter. The trouble is in this everlastin' lot o' lyin', gabblin' poll-parrots that he puts atwixt himself an' us, to tell him what the people do an' don't say an' do. An' to the poll-parrots he listens, and, listenin', b'lieves. So, for one, I should say the quicker we fight it out — whether it be in our streets or up to Boston — "

Mary now came into the room looking very grave; and her husband, paying no further attention to the pedler, asked anxiously, "What is amiss, sweet wife?"

She tried to speak quietly, but the tremor in her voice told of alarm.

"Dorothy is awake," she said, "and I think you had best see her at once. She seems ill."

They left the room together and were soon standing at the girl's bed, — one on either side, looking down at the restlessly moving head.

The big eyes stared at Jack for an instant with evident recognition. Then a vacant look came into them, and she laughed in a way to fill him with apprehension.

A moment more, and she began to mutter — something about Hugh Knollys falling into the water, and how dark and cool it was, and that she wanted to go into it, for she was hot, — so hot.

"She is out of her head," Mary whispered; "and this is the way she went on to me, before I called you."

Her husband looked again at the unquiet little figure, and reached down to take the small hand wandering about the coverlid; but she snatched it from his clasp.

"Go away, — go far away!" she cried. "I told you to go, and I meant it. Oh, yes, — I did mean it. I am only crying because I hate you, — never think it is for anything else. I hate you because your coat is red, — red, like the ruby ring you forced on my finger whether I would or no. And even the ring did not want to stay, for it knew me better than you did. It was so big that you had to hold it on; and now I've put it away safe, — safe, where no one will ever see, ever know. But it is red, and red means cruelty; and that is what this war is to be."

The babbling died away in a moan; but before

Jack or his wife could speak, Dorothy began again, now in a stronger voice than before.

"Moll said it must bring sorrow, — sorrow. And yet she said I wound him like a silken thread around my finger. Ah, *that* winds tight, although the ring was loose. And the thread Moll spoke of means love, but the ring means — But no, I must not tell, never, never, for it would kill my father. Father, I want you, — where are you?"

This came in a loud cry, and she sank back sobbing, on the pillows, — for she had struggled partially to her elbow, where Jack held her so that she could rise no farther.

"Mary, what is to be done?" asked the young man helplessly, anxiety and fear having for the moment deprived him of his usual promptness and decision.

"Don't you think we had best send for your father and Aunt Lettice?" Mary said in her calm way, although the tears were running down her cheeks. "And the doctor must be called at once."

"Leet has already gone into the town to tell them that Dot is here. But I will have Trent put the horses into the sleigh, and he and I will hasten in at once and fetch them all back, and the doctor as well, unless he can come out ahead of us. You will stop right here beside her, won't you, sweetheart?" he added anxiously, as he turned to leave the room.

"Why, of course I will." And Mary looked at her husband a little reproachfully.

"And you do not mind being left alone?" he asked, looking back over his shoulder, while his

hand gripped the open door in a way that told of the tension upon him.

She shook her head, smiling at him through her tears.

Jack had no sooner gone than the faithful Tyntie came to see if she were needed. But Mary sent her away with the assurance that she herself could do all that was to be done at present.

The ravings of the sick girl troubled her; and she deemed it prudent that no other ear should hear words she felt might have a hidden meaning.

Dorothy still rambled on about the ruby ring and scarlet coat. Once the name of Master Weeks fell from her lips, coupled with wild lamentations that she had ever signed the register, and so risked the breaking of her father's heart.

After a little time — Dorothy having become quiet — Mary stood looking out of the window, her eyes resting on the glittering fields that spread away to the gray line of the ocean, where the cold waves were curling in with glassy backs, and foam-ridged edges as white as the snow they seemed to seek upon the land.

She had been watching the gulls circling about with shrill screams or hanging poised over the water, when a low call caused her to start.

She turned at once, to see Dorothy sitting up and looking intently at her, while she seemed to fumble under the pillow for something.

"What is it, dear?" Mary asked, hastening to the side of the bed.

Dorothy drew from beneath the pillow a heavy

ring of yellow gold, with a great ruby imbedded in it, like a drop of glowing wine.

"There it is," she whispered, putting the ring into Mary's hand. "It is his ring, — only he gave it to me. Hide it, — hide it, Mary. Never let any one see — any one know. I want to tell you all about it, but I am so tired now, so tired, and —" The girl fell back with closed eyes, and in a moment she appeared to be asleep.

After standing a few minutes with her eyes fixed upon the unconscious face, Mary opened her hand and looked at the ring.

It was a man's ring, and one she recalled at once as having seen before.

It had been upon the shapely brown hand lifted to remove the hat from a young man's head, that summer day, at the Sachem's Cave.

There came to her a sudden rush of misgiving, as she asked herself the meaning of it all. What had this hated Britisher's ring to do with Dorothy's illness and with her ravings? What was all this about Master Weeks, and signing the register?

She determined to tell her husband of what she had heard and seen, and let his judgment decide what was to be done.

And yet when he returned, and with him his father and Aunt Lettice and 'Bitha, all of them sad-faced and alarmed over Dorothy's sudden sickness, something seemed to hold back the words Mary had intended to speak. And so she said nothing to her husband, but hid the ring away, resolved that for the present, at least, she would hold her own counsel.

After all — so she tried to reason — it might be nothing more than that the young Britisher had given Dorothy the ring.

And yet that the girl should accept such a gift from him surprised and grieved her, knowing as she did that had there been any lovemaking between the two, it would surely bring greater trouble than she dared now to consider.

Mary was one who always shrank from doing aught to cause discord; and so, albeit with a mind filled with anxiety, she decided to keep silence.

Dorothy's ailment proved to be an attack of brain fever, and it was many weeks before she recovered. And when she was pronounced well again, she went about the old house, such a pale-faced, listless shadow of her former self that her brother watched her with troubled eyes, while her father was well-nigh beside himself with anxiety.

But as often as they spoke to her of their misgivings she answered that she was entirely well, and would soon be quite as before.

She appeared to have forgotten about the ring, and Mary waited for her to mention it, wondering after a time that she did not.

At last, late in January, the hated soldiers were ordered away from the Neck; and great was the rejoicing amongst the townspeople, whose open demonstrations evinced their delight at being freed from the petty tyranny of their unwelcome visitors.

It was John Devereux who brought the news, as the other members of the family sat late one afternoon about the big fireplace in the drawing-room.

Aunt Lettice and Mary were busy with some matter of sewing, and 'Bitha, with an unusually grave face, was seated between them on a low stool. A half-finished sampler was on her knee, and the firelight quivered along the bright needle resting where she had left off when it became too dark for her to work.

Dorothy was at the spinet, drawing low music from the keys, and playing as if her thoughts were far away.

Her father had just come from out of doors, and now sat in his big armchair, with his hands near the blaze, for the cold had increased with the setting of the sun.

It had gone down half an hour before, leaving a great crimson gash in the western sky, above which ran a bank of smoky gray clouds, where the evening star was beginning to blink.

It had been a day of thawing. The sun had started the icy rime to running from the trees and shrubs, and melted the snow upon the roofs, while the white covering of the land was burned away here and there, until it seemed to be out at knees and elbows, where showed the brown and dirty green of the soil.

But an intense cold had come with the darkness, turning the melted snow to crystal, and hanging glittering pendants from everything.

"I wish Cousin Dot was all well, the way she used to be," sighed small 'Bitha, sitting with her rosy face so rumpled by the pressure of the little supporting palms as to remind one of the cherubs seen upon ancient tombstones.

She spoke in a voice too low for any one to hear

save those nearest her; and Mary gave a warning "Hush," as she glanced at the abstracted face of her father-in-law, who was gazing intently at the flames leaping from the logs.

"She'll not hear what I say," the child went on, now with a touch of impatience. "She often does n't hear me when I speak to her. Many times I ask her something over and over again, when she is looking straight at me; and then she will act as if she'd been asleep, and ask me what I've been saying."

"Your cousin was very ill, you must remember, 'Bitha," her grandame explained; "and it takes her a long time to recover, and be like herself again."

But the child shook her blonde head with an air of profound wisdom.

"I think it is only that bad medicine of Dr. Paine's," she said. "When I am ill, I shall ask Tyntie to fetch me a medicine man, such as the Indians have. I should like to see him dance and beat his drum."

"I should think we have had enough of the sound of beating drums, 'Bitha," replied Mary, speaking so sharply as to arouse her father-in-law into looking toward her.

Here John Devereux, just returned from the town, came in and announced the withdrawal of the British soldiers from the town and Neck.

"When will they go?" his wife asked eagerly.

"A shipload of them has already sailed, — it left the harbor before sunset; and some of the dragoons are about starting. It did my heart good to see the red-backs taking the road to Salem. We are well

quit of them; and when they are gone we can easily manage all the ships they send into the harbor to annoy us or spy upon us."

He laughed with a mingling of indignation and contempt; but his manner changed quickly as he glanced toward his sister.

"Dot!" he cried, "what is it, child?" And he sprang to her.

She had turned about when he came into the room, and was now lying back against the spinet, her head on the music-rack, — lying there speechless, motionless; for the girl — and for the first time in her life — had fainted.

"No." She said it vaguely, wonderingly, as if dreaming. Then she cried in terror, "Oh, Mary, you did not show it to Jack, nor tell him or my father of the matter?"

"No, my dear," Mary answered with an assuring smile. "I waited until you were well enough to tell me more, or else tell them yourself."

"Good Mary, — good, true sister." And Dorothy pressed her lips to the hand she clasped.

"But the matter has given me such a heartache, Dot, for I feared I might be doing wrong. Surely no one can love you more than your own father and brother. Why not tell them, as well as me, of — whatever it is?"

"I will, Mary," Dorothy said resolutely. "I intended to, all the time. But not yet, not yet. I want to tell you, first of all, and see if you can think what is best to be done. And," with a little shudder, "I thought I had lost the ring; and the first day I was able to slip out of doors, I hunted for it where I got off the horse that night. Oh, that dreadful night!" She almost cried out the words as the sharpness of awakened sorrow came to her.

"Come, Dot," Mary urged, "tell me. I'll promise to keep silent until you bid me speak." She knew they were losing precious time, for her husband would not be long gone, having promised to return in order that she might go down for her own supper.

Dorothy hesitated no longer, but, in the fewest possible words, unburdened her heart, while Mary listened in speechless amazement.

Her indignation and horror grew apace until the story was all told. Then she cried: "It was a cowardly, unmanly trick, — a traitor's deed! He is no gentleman, with all his fine pretence of manners."

"Ah — but he is." And Dorothy sighed softly, and in a way to have opened Mary's eyes, had she been less absorbed by the anger now controlling her.

"By birth, mayhap," she admitted, although reluctantly; then adding fiercely, "he surely is not one in his acts."

Then her voice grew gentle again, and the tears seemed to be near, as she laid her head alongside the curly one upon the pillow.

"Oh, my poor, poor little Dot," she said; "to think of the dreadful thing you have been carrying in your mind all this time! Small wonder that you were pale and sad, — it was enough to kill you."

The words brought Dorothy's grief to her once more. Then Mary broke down as well, and the two wept together, their heads touching each other on the pillow.

"And now whatever is to be done?" Mary said, as soon as her calmness returned, — a calmness filled with indignation and resentment. "Since this man is surely your husband, you must needs obey him, I suppose, if he insists upon it. And now that he is going away, it would seem natural for him to come here, despite his promise to wait until he was asked. And I should say he would be quite sure to demand that you go away with him. And," almost in terror, "for your father to hear of it for the first time in such a fashion, and from him!"

"Oh, Mary, don't talk in that way!" cried Dorothy, in affright, and clinging still closer to her.

"But never you fear, Dot," Mary said more encouragingly, "so long as Jack is here to look after you. That man will never dare seek to drag you from your father's house while Jack is about. And besides, the townspeople would never permit him to leave the place alive, should he attempt such a thing."

"I won't go — I 'll never go!" Dorothy exclaimed passionately. "But —" Her voice took a different note, and she stopped.

"But — what?" asked Mary instantly, for she heard her husband's footsteps on the uncarpeted staircase.

"I don't want any harm to befall him," was the tremulous answer.

"Oh, Dot," Mary began in dismay, "can it be possible that, after all, you —"

But Dorothy interrupted her.

"Hush!" she whispered, "here comes Jack." Then beseechingly, "Oh, Mary, say once more that you 'll not tell him yet."

But her husband was already in the room, and all Mary could do was to press Dorothy's hand.

A little later in the evening all the members of the family were again in the drawing-room. Dorothy, in order to relieve their anxiety, and especially on her father's account, had joined them; and the girl now made greater efforts than ever before to appear like herself.

This was now easier for her, from having shared her burdensome secret with Mary, who seemed to

have taken upon her shoulders a good part of the troublesome load.

She carried herself with a much quieter mien than usual, but in a way not to excite comment, save when her husband said to her as they were closing the shutters to keep out the night and make the room still more cosey, "What is it, sweetheart, — are you troubled over Dot?"

"Yes," she replied, thankful that she could answer so truthfully.

"The child is going to be as she should, I am sure," he said, glancing over his shoulder to where his sister was sitting, close beside her father, her head resting against his shoulder. She was smiling at something Aunt Lettice had been telling of 'Bitha, whom she had just been putting to bed.

Before Mary could say anything more, a sudden clatter of hoofs outside announced the arrival of horsemen, and a minute later the sounding of the heavy brass knocker echoed through the hall.

Dorothy and Mary looked at each other in alarm, the same intuition making them fear what this might portend.

"Whatever can it be at this hour!" exclaimed Joseph Devereux, as his son went to answer the noisy summons. "I hope nothing is wrong in the town."

There came the sound of men's voices, low at first, but soon growing louder, and then almost menacing, as the outer door was sharply closed.

"And I say, sirrah," — it was the voice of John Devereux — "that you cannot see her."

Dorothy sprang from her father's side and sped to the door, which she flung wide open, and stood, with widening eyes and pale cheeks, upon the threshold. A moment more, and Mary was alongside her; and then, his face filled with amazement and anger, Joseph Devereux followed them.

Standing with his back against the closed door, was a stalwart young dragoon, his red uniform making a ruddy gleam in the dimly lit hall as he angrily confronted the son of the house.

But no sooner did he catch sight of the small figure in the open doorway than the anger left his face, and he stood before her with uncovered head, paying no more heed to the others than if they had been part of the furniture in the hall.

"Sweet Mistress Dorothy," he said, — and his eyes searched her face with a passionate inquiry — "we are ordered away, as you may have heard. I am leaving the town to-night, and could not go until I had seen you once more."

The eyes looking up into his were filled with many emotions, but Dorothy made no reply.

He waited a moment for her to speak. Then an eager, appealing look came to his face, and he asked, "Have you naught to say to me — no word for me before I go?"

Joseph Devereux now found his voice.

"Aught to say to ye, sirrah!" he demanded furiously. "What should a daughter o' mine have to say to one of His Majesty's officers, who has been to this house but once before, and then, as now, only by means of his own audacity?"

At the sound of this angry voice Dorothy shuddered, and tearing her eyes from those blue ones that had not once left her face, she turned quickly and clung to her father.

The young man laughed, but not pleasantly, and there was a nervous twitching of the fingers resting upon the hilt of his sword.

"You are surely aware, sir," he said, "that I have the honor of a slight acquaintance with your daughter. And I fail to see why I should be insulted, simply because I was mistaken in holding it to be but natural courtesy that I should bid her farewell."

Here his voice broke in a way that was strange to all save Dorothy and Mary, as he added: "We leave this place to-morrow, sir, and your daughter and myself are never like to meet again; and I had good reason to wish the privilege of begging her forgiveness for aught I may have done to cause her annoyance. And if she refused me forgiveness, then she might be pleased to wish me a right speedy meeting with a bullet from one of her own people's guns."

Joseph Devereux looked sorely puzzled at these strange words, which seemed to bear some hidden meaning. Then, as he felt the quivering of the slight form clinging to him so closely, and heard the tremulous "Oh, father, speak him kindly," his face relaxed and he spoke less brusquely than at first.

"Your conduct seems rather cavalier, young sir, but we surely have no wish to seem insulting; and as for any annoyance you may have caused my daughter, I am ignorant o' such. It is but natural, considering the times, that we do not relish receiving into our

houses gentry who wear such color as is your coat; and yet we are not cut-throats, either in deed or thought. We pray and hope for the good of our country and cause; and for such, and such only, do we think o' the use o' bullets."

During all this time the dragoon's eyes never strayed from the curly head pressed against the old man's arm. And now, while her father was speaking, Dorothy's face was turned, and the big dark eyes, full of perplexity and fear, met his own and held them.

Mary had made a sign to her husband, and he followed her into the drawing-room, where Aunt Lettice was still sitting before the fire, the trembling fingers betraying her excitement as they flashed the slender needles back and forth through the stocking she was knitting.

"What does it all mean, dear?" she inquired, as Mary came and looked down into the fire, while she twisted her hands together in a nervous fashion most unusual with her.

"It means," John Devereux answered angrily, but not loud enough to reach the ears of those in the hall, "that there is never any telling to what length the presuming impudence of these redcoats will go." He ground his teeth savagely as he wondered why he had not taken the intruder by the collar and ejected him before the others came upon the scene; and he was now angry at himself for not having done this.

"Whatever can he wish to say good-by to Dot for?" he muttered hastily to his wife. "And whatever can he mean about annoying her? Annoy her,

indeed! Had he done such a thing, I should have heard of it ere this, and he would not have gone unpunished all these days, to crawl in now with a pretence of apology."

"It seems to me there was little show of crawling in the way he came," said Mary, with the ghost of a smile, and speaking only because her husband seemed to be expecting her to say something. Her brain was in a tumult as she wondered what would be the end of all this, and what would — what could poor Dorothy do for her own peace of mind and that of her father?

She feared that, should a sudden knowledge of the truth come to him, it might be his death-blow; and she made no doubt that if her hot-headed husband knew it, the young dragoon would scarcely be permitted to leave the house unscathed, if indeed he were not killed outright. And then she thought of a duel, — of its chances, and of her husband not being the one to survive.

At this a low cry escaped from her lips before she could prevent it; and her husband stepped closer to her side.

"It is nothing — nothing," she said brokenly, in response to his anxious questioning. "I was but thinking."

"Thinking of what, sweetheart?"

"If any harm should befall you," she answered.

"Why, what harm, think you, should come to me?" And he took her hands, holding them close, while he tried to look into her averted eyes.

"I — don't know," she said evasively. "These

are such dreadful times that have come to us, that no one can tell what is like to happen. Oh," with a sudden impetuous burst, more suited to Dorothy than to her own calm self, "I wish there had never been such a nation as the English!"

When Joseph Devereux had done speaking, the young man turned his eyes from the pale face in which he seemed to have been searching for some hint or suggestion as to what he should now say.

That his quest was fruitless, — that he found nothing, no fleeting glance or expression, to indicate the girl's present feeling toward him, was apparent from the look of keen disappointment, well-nigh despair, that now settled upon his own face, making it almost ghastly in the uncertain light.

But despite all this, his self-control did not leave him; and after one more glance into the dark eyes — fixed and set, as though there was no life animating them — he drew himself erect, and made an odd gesture with his right hand, flinging it out as if forever thrusting aside all further thought of her. Then, without looking at her again, he addressed her father.

"It was not to discuss such matters that I ventured to force my way into this house, sir," he said with a dignified courtesy hardly to be looked for in one of his years. "It was only that I could not — or felt that I should not — go away without holding speech with Mistress Dorothy. It would seem that she has naught to say to me, and so I have only to beg her pardon, and take my leave. And, sir, I entreat the same pardon from you and the other members of

your household for any inconvenience I may have caused you and them."

He bowed to the old gentleman, and turned slowly away. But before he had taken many steps toward the outer door, Dorothy's voice arrested him, and he turned quickly about.

"Stay — wait a moment." And leaving her father's side, she went toward the young man.

"Believe me," she said, speaking very low and very gently, as she paused while yet a few steps away from him, "I wish you well, not harm."

"Do you still hold to what you told me?" he asked quickly, paying no heed to her words.

His voice did not reach her father's ears; and the young man's eyes searched her face as though his fate depended upon what he might read there.

"Yes!" The answer was as low-pitched as his question, but firm and fearless. And he saw the fingers of both little hands clench themselves in the folds of her gown, while the lace kerchief crossed over her bosom seemed to pulsate with the angry throbbing of her heart.

"And you will never forgive me?" He spoke now in a louder tone, but with the same pleading look in his pale face.

Dorothy's eyes met his own fairly and steadily, but she said nothing.

He waited a second, and then bending quickly, he clasped both her hands and carried them to his lips.

"God help me," he said hoarsely, as he released them, — "God help both of us!"

With this he turned away, and opening the door, went out into the darkness.

Dorothy stood perfectly still, with her father staring perplexedly into her white face. It had all passed too quickly for him to interfere, — to speak, even, had he been so minded.

At the sound of the closing door John Devereux came again into the hall; and now the noise of horses' hoofs was heard, dying away outside.

"Dot — my child, what is it?" her father exclaimed, his heart stirred by a presentiment of some ill he could not define. And he moved toward the mute figure standing like a statue in the centre of the wide hall.

But John was there before him; and as he passed his arm around her, she started, and a dry, gasping breath broke from her lips, — one that might have been a sob, had there been any sign of tears in the wild eyes that seemed to hold no sight as they were turned to her brother's face.

"Dot — little sister," he cried, "tell me — what is the matter?"

And Mary, now close beside them, added quickly, "Tell him, Dot, — tell him now."

"Tell," Dorothy repeated mechanically, her voice sounding strained and husky. "Tell — tell him yourself, Mary. Tell him that — " And she fell, a dead weight, against her brother's breast.

CHAPTER XXV

WHETHER it was due to ordinary physical causes, or was the result of mental agitation arising from what has been told herein, cannot well be determined; but, soon after Dorothy had been carried to her room, — conscious, but in a condition to forbid all questioning or explanation — her father was taken with what in the language of that day was termed a " seizure," — so serious as to alarm the household, and divert all thoughts from other affairs.

He had been pacing up and down the drawing-room, now deserted by all save himself and his son. His hands were clasped behind him, his chin was sunk upon his breast, and his brows knit as though from anxious thought.

Jack sat staring into the fire; and both were waiting for the return of either Mary or Aunt Lettice, both of whom had gone to Dorothy's room to give her such attention as she might require.

It was Mary who came to announce that the girl was now better, and that, having taken a sleeping potion administered by Aunt Lettice, she wished to see her father.

The old gentleman left the room with a brisk step; and Mary's eyes followed him nervously as she went over and seated herself by her husband.

They were silent for a time, both of them watching the flames that arched from the logs over the fiery

valleys and miniature cliffs made by the burnt and charred wood, until Jack asked suddenly, "Why do you not tell me now, sweetheart?"

Mary well knew what he meant; but she waited a moment, thinking how best she might reveal the sad and terrible matter she had to disclose.

"Mary," — he now spoke a little impatiently, and as though to rouse her from her abstraction — "tell me what all this means."

She stole a hand into his, and then repeated to him all that Dorothy had told her.

He listened with fast-growing anger; and then, coupled with his first outburst of rage against the hated redcoat, were reproaches for his wife, that she had not sooner, informed him of the trouble.

"He would never have left the house alive, had I known it before," he cried savagely. "As it is, I 'll ride after him as soon as day comes, and call him to an accounting for his villany, — the dastardly scoundrel! And Mary — oh, my wife, how could you keep it from me till now?"

Her heart sank at this, the first note of reproof or displeasure his voice had ever held for her.

"You must remember, Jack," she pleaded, "how sorely I was distressed to know what to do, for I had given my promise to Dot, and could not break it. And you must know as well that it was not until this very evening that I learned of the matter."

"True," he admitted. "But" — persistently — "there was the ruby ring, when the child was first taken ill; how could you keep that from me?"

He spoke reproachfully, but his voice was growing

softer, and his anger was now gone, for Mary was sobbing, her head against his breast. And this was as strange to him as his harsh words had been to her.

"I'll never — never keep any matter from you again," she protested brokenly. "I promise it, Jack, for now I see it was very wrong."

"There — there, sweetheart," he said soothingly, as he stroked her bright hair, — "'t is all well for us now, and will ever be, if you but keep to what you say. But Dot — poor little Dot!" And his anger came again.

"Oh, that villain, that cursed villain, — but he shall reckon with me for this outrage! And 't is well for that scoundrel Weeks that he's been made to flee the town for his seditious sentiments and preachings."

"But," Mary explained, "Dot said he was forced to do it, at peril of his life; that he — the Englishman — held a pistol to his head and swore he'd shoot him if he refused."

"Pah," said Jack, contemptuously, "he'd never have dared go so far as that. Master Weeks is but a poor coward." Then he asked quickly, "Think you, Mary, that Dot is telling our father aught of the matter now?"

"I cannot say," was his wife's irresolute answer. "I fear so, and yet I cannot but hope so, as well, — for how can another ever tell him?"

"Aye," groaned the young man; "it will come nigh to killing him."

But Dorothy had not told her father anything. No sooner had he come to her bedside than her eyes

filled with a contented light, and slipping her hand within his close clasp, she fell tranquilly asleep, too stunned and numbed by physical weakness and contending emotions, — her senses too dulled from the effects of Aunt Lettice's draught — to find words wherein to pour out her heart to him.

He left her sleeping quietly, and returned to those below; and soon thereafter the seizure came, and he fell back in his chair, speechless, with closed eyes and inert limbs.

It was Mary and Aunt Lettice who ministered to him, with the help of his son and the faithful Tyntie, who was summoned from Dorothy's room, where she had been sent to watch the sleeping girl.

Leet was too old and slow of movement to be entrusted with the summoning of Dr. Paine; and Trent, who slept in one of the outer buildings, was aroused and despatched forthwith, with orders to use all possible speed, as they feared the master was already dead or dying.

They carried him at once to his own bed, where he lay unconscious, with no change in his appearance or breathing; and his son, sitting beside him, gazed with agonized eyes upon the white face lying against the pillows, his own face almost as white, and seeming to have aged under this flood of sorrow now opened in their midst.

It was well along toward morning, although yet dark, with the sky cloudless and gemmed with stars, before Dr. Paine arrived.

The first thing the bustling little man did was to

bleed his patient, as was then the practice in treating most ailments. Its present efficacy was soon apparent, for it was not long before the labored, irregular breathing became more natural and the old man opened his eyes.

But there was an unusual look in them, — one that never went away. And although after a time he recovered some of his strength, and was able to go about the house, the hale, rugged health and vigorous manhood were gone forever, and Joseph Devereux remained but a shadow of his former self.

His days were all alike, — passed in sitting before the fire downstairs, or else dozing in his own room; and he had neither care nor thought for the matters that had once been of such moment to him.

The others were with him constantly, to guard against possible accident or harm, as well as to do all in their power in smoothing the way for the loved one they felt was soon to leave them. And he, as well as themselves, albeit he never spoke of it, seemed to understand this, — that they, like him, were waiting for the end, when he should be summoned by the voice none can deny.

And thus he remained day after day, spending much of his time with the other members of his family, — listening apparently to all they might say to him or to one another; but sitting with silent lips, and eyes that seemed to grow larger and more wondrous in expression and light, as if already looking into that mysterious world, —

> "Beyond the journeyings of the sun,
> Where streams of living waters run," —

that world whose glories no speech might convey to earthly understanding.

"I can never tell him now," Dorothy said with bitter sorrow, addressing Mary, as the two were alone in the dining-room. It was one of the days when her father had risen for his morning meal, and, after sitting with them awhile, had returned to his room to lie down.

"'T is best not, dear," Mary assented. "Do not burden his heart now, for it would only give him bitter sorrow to brood over. Jack knows the whole matter, and he can do all that is to be done."

"And what is that?" Dorothy asked, speaking a little sharply.

"Call the man to a strict account," was Mary's reply, with anger now showing in her voice.

"No, Mary, no," cried Dorothy, with much of her old spirit. "That must not be, — at least not now." Then more gently, as she observed Mary's look of surprise, "Naught that he nor any one can say or do will mend what has been done; and it is my earnest wish that the matter be let alone, just as it is, for the present. Perhaps the future may show some way out of it." But she spoke as though saying one thing and meaning quite another.

"Will you tell Jack all this?" Mary asked, with an odd look.

"Me?" cried Dorothy, in great alarm. "No, no, Mary; you must do that. I do not wish to have him speak to me of the matter; I could not bear it." And she covered her face with her hands, as if to shut out the very prospect of such a thing.

Mary's white forehead wrinkled as though from perplexity, while her slender fingers tapped nervously upon the arm of her chair.

She knew not what to make of the girl, — of her words and actions, of her strange and sudden sickness and faintings, of all that had come to her since the advent of this young Britisher.

And within these past few minutes a new anxiety had found its way into her mind, and this prompted her to ask, "Can it be, Dot, that you have permitted this stranger to come between you and your only brother, who loves you best of all in the world?"

But Dorothy evaded the question. "That he does not," she asserted, taking her hands from in front of her face and trying to smile; "'t is you he loves best of all."

Mary flushed a little, but replied with tender earnestness, "But you know, Dot, he and I are one. We both love you next to each other, and we wish to serve you and assure your happiness."

Dorothy sighed and looked down at the floor. "I doubt if I shall ever be happy again, Mary," she said; "and the best way to serve me is to leave me alone and let me go my own way."

She spoke as though wishing to dismiss the matter, and, rising from her chair, walked over to the window and stood looking off over the meadow lands and toward the sea.

It was a cheering, hopeful sight, for the snow was gone, and everything in nature was beginning to show a touch of the coming spring.

Later that same morning they were in Mary's room,

the young wife busy with some sewing, while Dorothy, with much of the former color showing in her face, was moving restlessly about.

"Dorothy!"

Mary spoke suddenly, as though impelled by a hasty resolution, and there was a look in her blue eyes that made a fitting accompaniment to her words; but she kept them averted from Dorothy, who had turned and was coming slowly toward her.

"Dorothy," she repeated, as the girl drew close to her, "where is that ruby ring?"

Dorothy came to a stop, and every drop of blood seemed to find its way to her face.

"Eh, — ring, — what ring?" She glanced at her hands, and then at Mary's face, still turned partially away from her.

"That ruby ring I gave you back, and advised that you throw it into the fire or into the sea, and with it all thought of the dastardly giver."

Dorothy did not reply, and Mary now looked at her as she said slowly and distinctly, "If you cannot tell, I can. It is over your heart, hanging about your neck on a chain."

The girl gave a gasp, and Mary saw her face paling, only to flush again, while the dark eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, Dot," she cried, astonished and angry, "how can you love such a man?"

Dorothy threw herself on her knees and hid her face in Mary's lap, sobbing as if the words had broken a seal set to keep this knowledge from even her own heart.

"I don't know, Mary, but I do — I do love him, and have, for always. And now he has gone — gone away, thinking I hate him, and I may never see him again."

Mary put her arms around the little form, and used all her efforts to soothe the passionate outburst. She could not but feel that she had been wise in thus forcing Dorothy to open her heart, for not only did she know the girl would feel better for having spoken, but she herself had a new and most important fact to guide her own future action.

CHAPTER XXVI

MARY felt that she must lose no time in making her husband as wise as herself with respect to Dorothy's real sentiments, and in having him understand that he could not bring any harm to the young Britisher without making his sister all the more unhappy.

She wondered what Jack would say — as to the effect it would have upon his temper and actions. But she was determined upon this, — that if he showed resentment or anger, she would assert herself in Dorothy's defence, feeling as she did that it was too late to do other than submit to what fate had brought about, and all the more especially, since Dorothy had confessed to loving this man.

"I could almost wish he had been killed outright the morning I made him tumble over the rocks," she said to herself, "or that he had fallen into the sea, never to be seen again." Then, realizing that this was little short of murder, she shrank from such musings, shocked to find herself so wicked.

There came still another burden of sorrow when she imparted the whole truth to her husband.

He listened with a brooding face, only the unusual glitter in his eyes showing how it stirred him. Then, after a long silence, while he appeared to be turning the matter in his mind, he exclaimed, not angrily, but with nothing showing in his voice save bitter self-

reproach: "Blind fool that I 've been, seeking to keep my little sister a child in thought. And right here, under my very eyes, has she become a woman, both in love and suffering!"

He sprang to his feet and began to pace back and forth, his wife watching him with troubled eyes. Presently he came and looked down into her face.

His own was pale, but it had a set, determined expression, as though the struggle were over, and he had turned his back upon all the hopes he had builded for his beloved sister, — upon what might have been, but now never to be.

"Sweetheart," he said, "there is one other we are bound in honor to take into our confidence, to tell all we know of this sad matter, and that is Hugh Knollys. He is not like to return here this many a day; still it is possible he may, or that I may be sent to the neighborhood of Boston before the summer comes. But whichever way I see him, I shall have to tell him the truth. Poor old Hugh!"

"Why, John!" But Mary's eyes filled with a look bespeaking full knowledge of what he was to say, although she had never suspected it until now.

He told her of all that passed between Hugh and himself that night, so many months ago. And when he finished, she could only sigh, and repeat his own words, "Poor Hugh!"

"Aye, poor Hugh, indeed, for I know the boy's heart well. It will be a dreadful thing for him to face, and with his hands tied, as are my own, against doing aught to the Britisher because his welfare matters so much to Dot."

Then he added almost impatiently: "I wish the child would let me talk with her. She must, before I go away, else I 'll speak without her consent. So long as we are situated as now, it may do no harm to let the matter drift along; but if I have to leave home — "

"Oh, Jack, don't speak of such a thing," Mary interrupted. And rising quickly, she laid her hand on his shoulder as though to hold him fast.

"Why not, sweetheart?" he said, compelled to smile at her anxiety. "We know what we have to face in these distracting times; we knew it when we married. Matters grow worse with every week, each day almost. But we must be brave, my darling, and you will best hold me to my duty by keeping a stout heart, no matter whether I go or stay. And go I am pretty sure to, the same as every other man in the town, for we may look, any day, for a battle somewhere about Boston."

Mary clung to him shudderingly, but was silent.

Hugh Knollys had been all this time at Cambridge, where troops were mustering from every part of the land; and many men from Marblehead were there or in the neighborhood.

They had heard from him but once, and then through Johnnie Strings, who, after this last trip — now over a month since — had returned to Cambridge with a very indefinite notion as to when he would come back to the old town.

The pedler also reported having seen Aunt Penine, who was quartered near Boston, at the house of some royalist relatives of her brother's wife, — he himself having left his home in Lynn and taken up arms for the King.

Mistress Knollys was also away, for she had closed her homestead and gone to stop with an only sister living at Dorchester, — doing this for safety, and before the soldiers left the Neck.

A decided feeling of impending war was now sharpened and well defined, and all were waiting for the actual clash of arms.

Late in February, His Majesty's ship "Lively," mounting twenty guns, arrived in the harbor and came to anchor off the fort; and her officers proceeded to make themselves fully as obnoxious as had the hated soldiers.

They diligently searched all incoming vessels that could by any pretext be suspected; and where they found anything in the nature of military stores, these were confiscated.

One vessel, carrying a chest of arms destined for the town, was, although anchored close to the "Lively," boarded one night by a party of intrepid young men under the lead of one Samuel R. Trevett, who succeeded in removing the arms, which they concealed on shore.

Later on in the month a body of troops landed one Sunday morning on Homans' Beach; and after loading their guns, the soldiers took up their march through the town.

The alarm drums were beaten at the door of every church to warn the worshippers, and it was not long before the hitherto quiet streets were thronged with an excited crowd of indignant citizens, gathered in active defence of their rights.

They suspected the object of the enemy to be the

seizure of several pieces of artillery secreted at Salem. But in this — or whatever was their purpose — they were baffled, meeting with such determined opposition as to be forced to march back to the shore and re-embark, with no more disastrous result to either side than the usual number of bloody faces and bruised fists, such as had distinguished the sojourn of the regulars upon the Neck.

Aside from these two events, the days in the old town passed much as before, despite the ever-increasing certainty of war, — this leading the townsfolk to go armed night and day, and to keep close watch from the outlooks for any sudden descent the enemy might seek to make.

The last vestige of snow was gone from the shaded nooks amid the trees on the hills, — the land, swept dry and clear of all signs of winter, was waiting for the sun to warm the brown earth into life; and in the hollows of the woods, the tender shoots of the first wild flowers were already showing, where the winds had brushed away the fallen leaves of the year before.

It was the twenty-first of April, and the expected battle had come at last, for Lexington was two days old. The news was brought into town before the morning of the twentieth, and had resulted in the sudden departure of many of the younger men for the immediate scene of action.

Among these was John Devereux; and Mary was to accompany her husband to the town, in order that she might be with him until the very last moment.

The parting between father and son was full of

solemnity, for each felt it to be the last time they would meet on earth.

"God bless and keep you, my dear boy," said Joseph Devereux, showing more of his natural vigor than for many weeks past, as he fixed his large eyes upon the handsome young face, pale, but filled with resolution and high purpose. "God bless and keep you in the struggle in which I know you will do your part unflinchingly. Never be guilty of aught in the future, as you have never in the past, to stain the good name you bear."

Fearing that which he deemed a reflection upon his manhood, the young man did not reply in words, but threw his arms about his father's neck in a way he had not done since boyhood; and the old man alone knew how something wet still lay upon his withered cheek after his son had left him.

The last person to whom Jack said farewell was his sister. She had stolen away to her own room, and there he found her weeping.

"Little Dot," he said in a choking voice, opening his arms to her as he paused just across the threshold.

She looked up, and with a low cry — half of pain, half joy — fled to him; and with this the shadow, almost estrangement, that had come between them was swept away forever.

He held her tight against his breast, and let her weep silently for a time, before he said very gently, "Dot, my little girl, I must speak to you on a certain matter before I go away."

She raised her head and kissed him; and this he

took as permission to tell her what was upon his mind.

"Dot, I cannot go from you without having everything between us the same as has been all our lives, until these past few sad months."

At this she clung all the closer to him.

"You were badly treated, little one," he continued, "shamefully treated; and it was a great grief to me that you did not come and trust your brother to the end of telling him the whole matter at the very first. But 't is all past now, and words are of no worth. Only this I must know from your own lips, — if you love this man who has forced himself to be your husband, and if you love him sufficiently to leave us all, should he so bid you?"

"That he will never do," Dorothy answered, her voice full of sad conviction. "He has gone, thinking I hate him."

"And why did you send him away with such a notion as that?"

"Oh, Jack," the girl cried piteously, "cannot you see — can you not understand? I could not go and leave you all. I dared not tell at the time all that had happened — I did not know what to do."

"And you love not the cause he fights for, though you love the man himself?" And a faint smile touched his lips.

"That is it, Jack," she answered, relieved at being understood. "You have spoken my own feelings. I could not leave father; had I done so, think of what would have come to me now."

"Poor father, 't is well he will never need to

know. Well, Dot," and he tried to speak cheerily, "although 't is a sad tangle now, perhaps time will straighten it somewhat; and all we can do is to wait and hope."

"And you 'll never say aught to — him, should you two meet?" Dorothy asked wistfully, a burning color deepening in her cheeks.

"Should he and I meet," the young man said with a scowl, "it is not likely to be in a fashion that will permit discourse of any sort." Then he regretted his words, for his sister shivered and hid her face over his heart.

"Come, Dot," — and now he spoke more calmly, while he caressed the curly head lying against his breast — "try to keep a brave heart. You have done no wrong, little one, and we are all in God's hands. Pray you to Him for your brother while he is from home; and pray as well that all these sad matters will come right in the end."

He pressed a kiss upon her tearful face, and was gone.

Arriving in the town, he found his companions ready to depart; and before sunset he was upon the road to Boston, leaving his wife to stop for a day with Mistress Horton.

The following evening it was apparent that the end was coming fast to Joseph Devereux.

Dorothy was alone with the stricken man, Aunt Lettice, who took 'Bitha with her, having gone into the town early that afternoon, to make some purchases, intending to return later with Mary.

Dr. Paine had told them how the end would

probably come; and it was as he had said. He himself was away toward Boston, where his services were most needed, and there was no other physician for Dorothy to summon, even had she felt it necessary.

But she well knew the uselessness of this. No human skill could prolong the life of him who had been stricken down late in the afternoon, and now lay unconscious, breathing heavily, like a strong swimmer breasting heavy seas. And what sea beats so relentlessly as do the black waters of Death?

Dorothy had stolen for a moment to the window, scarcely able to endure to sit longer by the bed, listening to those gasping breaths that wrung her heart with the passionate sense of impotence to help, or even ease, the dying man.

Curled up in the broad window-seat, her face turned from the dimly lighted room to the fast-falling night outside, the past, and its contrast with the present, seemed to unroll before her with a vividness of detail such as we are told comes to one who is drowning.

All that was happy seemed to lie behind her; all the cheer and comfort of the old home were gone, never to return — no more than would her father's protecting love.

And he — her father — was now drawing nigh to the day that knows no darkness, no dawning; while for her the night shadows of the bitter parting were closing about, dark and cold.

The incoming tide was almost at the full, and the surf sounded like a moaning voice from the sea. It was to the young girl's tortured imagination a warning

voice, bidding her heed that the fashion of this world must pass away, and with it the souls of its children, who, like merry little ones gathering flowers in fair fields, unheeding, unthinking, grow grave only as the day draws on. It told her that they grow wise — sad, perhaps — as the sun sinks; and that when the darkness falls they lie down to sleep, with tired brains and heavy hearts, all their buoyancy gone with the day's brightness. They have come to know its bitter lesson of weary struggle, of sore disappointment and heart-breaks.

The sky was filled with broken banks of ragged clouds that sent great tattered streamers across the zenith, entangling the glittering stars that seemed struggling to push them away, as if they were smothering draperies, from before their silvery faces.

Over in the east a faint spot of dusky red was showing in a cloud-rift. It was the rising moon, seeming to battle, like the stars, with the black hosts seeking to envelop it. It fought bravely, like a valiant soldier, and emerging triumphantly at last, threw a bar of dull red, like a pathway, across the sullen floor of the ocean.

This reached from the shore, out over the water, far away, to end in the heavy shadows looming against the horizon like the walls of the City of Death, whose angel keeper was even now unbarring the gates for the call that should bring the soul of Joseph Devereux within their misty portals.

Dwellers by the sea have a belief that the souls of those who are called, go ever with the turning of the tide. It was now only an hour, or less, to that; and

Dorothy was waiting with a trembling heart for the ebb of the sea to carry her father away to the world of shadows.

He lay motionless, as though his soul were already departed, save for that same heavy breathing.

There was no change in this. It was as regular in its hoarse panting as the swinging of the pendulum in the clock outside the door, — the old clock that had seen both joy and sorrow passing before it through many generations, and had seemed to look with friendliness upon every eye — blue, black, gray, or brown — uplifted to its great face, — eyes that had long since been closed, some of them not even having time to grow dim with age or be moistened by tears of grief.

"Gone — gone — going," it sighed in Dorothy's ears, until she covered them with her hands to shut out the sound, and with it the moaning of the surf.

"Dot, my little girl!" A faint voice broke the stillness as the heavy breathing was hushed.

She flew to the bedside and knelt there, while she pressed her warm mouth against the nerveless hand, whose chill seemed to strike her very heart. Her father felt the quivering of her lips, and tried to lift his other hand to her head.

She knew this without seeing it, and moving yet closer to him, she laid her face over his heart, her head fitting into the hollow of his arm as she clasped his hand with her small fingers.

"Dot, my baby — oh, my little girl!"

The words came with all his old strength of voice, and she felt that he was weeping.

Startled at this outbreak, and alarmed for fear of some injury it might do him, all the girl's grief became swallowed up in the new energy that now surged through her.

"Hush!" she said soothingly, placing her face against his own. "Hush, dear! Never mind me; I shall be well enough. I know — I know," choking back a sob that rose in her throat like a stinging blow, "that all is for the best, 'that He doeth all things well.'"

"Yes, yes," her father murmured drowsily, as though calmed by her words and caresses. "Aye, my child, 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' God is on the other side, waiting — waiting — for me."

His eyelids had fallen again, and the closing words came in a faint whisper. He was now breathing heavily as before, and was seemingly unconscious; and Dorothy felt that he had come back for a moment from out the dark shadows gathering to shut them apart, so that he might speak to her once more in the voice she loved so dearly.

She did not stir, but remained kneeling by the bed, his arm around her, and his hand clasping her fingers with marvellous firmness.

She could feel and hear the feeble beating of the loving heart that had ever held her so tenderly. Throbbing against her cheek, its pulses seemed to keep rhythm with the mournful booming of the surf on the shore.

Suddenly, like a mighty ocean of falling waters, there came, to overwhelm her unnatural calm, the

thought of what her world would be when that true, loyal heart was stilled, — when she could only lay her cheek against the earth that shut it away from her.

A giant hand seemed clutching at her throat; the grief, rising in mighty bursts, could find no vent in tears, and a gasping cry sprang from her lips, causing her to stir unconsciously within his arm.

His grasp tightened upon her hand, and her acutely listening ears heard him whisper brokenly, "'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end.'"

The words brought to her a strange comfort. And now his feeble hand caressed her head in a wandering, fluttering way, and she felt as in her baby days when he used to rock her to sleep; for his failing voice began to croon the old hymn he so often sang to her then.

She crept still closer to him. She was quieted for the moment, and filled with an awe as if angels were all about them. Her wild grief was hushed, — the agony of clutching pain in her throat dissolved itself in silent tears, and the sound of the surf now seemed a peaceful, soothing voice.

She felt as though she were going with her father along the way through the dark valley, — even to the very gates of jasper and pearl that would give him entrance to the City of Light, then to close, leaving her without.

Fainter, yet fainter grew his voice, at length dying away altogether. She heard her name breathed softly, just as he used to speak it when she, a little maid, was nestling in his arms, and he wished to assure himself of her being asleep.

"Yes," she whispered.

"My baby, 't is growing dark, blackly dark, little one. Ye 'd better get to bed."

She made no answer — she could not, but listened breathlessly.

"My baby — my baby Dot. God keep my baby!"

The words were scarcely spoken, but came like long sighs, to mingle and die away with the night wind moaning outside the window. And it was as if the surf caught them, and repeated them to the watching stars.

"God — keep — my — baby!"

The room was still — still as the great loving heart under her cheek. And the tide was on the ebb.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE summer days found Glover's regiment stationed, a portion at Cambridge, and the remainder on the high grounds of Roxbury, where were also all the other Massachusetts troops, as well as some of those from Connecticut.

John Devereux, being on duty at Cambridge, had approved of his wife accepting Mistress Knollys' invitation to stop with her in Dorchester. Her brother-in-law had been killed at Bunker Hill, and his devoted wife, broken-hearted, died soon thereafter, thus leaving Mistress Knollys entirely alone.

Mary insisted upon Dorothy accompanying her, for the girl had become greatly changed since her father's death, and Mary, as well as Aunt Lettice, deemed it wise to try the diverting effect of new scenes and associations. Then, too, Dorothy had always been a prime favorite with Mistress Knollys, and returned sincerely the good lady's motherly affection.

Thus it was that Aunt Lettice and 'Bitha were left alone at the Devereux farm, whose flocks and stores had already been much depleted by generous contributions sent up to the patriot army about Boston.

Mary saw her husband at rare intervals, when it was possible for him to snatch a few hours from his post of duty; but Hugh never came.

Mary could readily divine the reason for this, and so could Mistress Knollys, albeit the subject was never mentioned between them: for soon after their arrival, Mary, with Dorothy's consent, had told her of all that related to the young Englishman.

At first the old lady was filled with righteous indignation. But when she came to understand and realize how it was with Dorothy's own feelings, she accepted the result with the philosophy that was a part of her sweet nature, — even smiling to herself when she thought of the young man's rare audacity.

She had, despite her white hairs, a spice of romance yet left in her heart. And perhaps the memory of her own elopement, in the face of her parents' prohibition, went far toward softening her feeling in favor of the daring offender.

But she shook her head sadly as she thought of her own boy, the secret of whose heart she had long suspected, although he had not given her his confidence; and her eyes moistened as she realized the downfall of the cherished castle she had been building for him, with this girl — of her own choosing — for his wife.

Late one September day, Johnnie Strings brought word to Dorothy that Aunt Penine lay at death's door, and was craving to see her.

It was decided that she had better accede to her aunt's request, and that Mary should go with her; and so, in pursuance of arrangements made by the pedler, they started on horseback the following morning, with that wary individual as escort, and rode directly to a certain tavern just inside the American

lines, and known as "The Gray Horse Inn," where they procured a conveyance to carry them the remainder of the journey.

Strings himself did not deem it wise to venture nearer than this to Boston, as he was expected to hold himself in readiness at the inn to receive some papers to be delivered to the Commander-in-Chief at Cambridge.

It was late in the afternoon when the two girls, after having seen Aunt Penine and made peace with her, hurried down the street toward the place where their carriage was awaiting them.

The day was gray, with clouds gathering slowly, when they had set out on foot from this point for their visit to Aunt Penine, their driver having considered it better that he should wait for them near the house of an acquaintance, whose true sentiments were known to only a few of his countrymen. And now, as they returned, a strong east-wind was making mournful soughings in the trees, and a downpour of rain seemed imminent from the solidly massed clouds overhead.

As they came down the steps of the house, Mary noticed a man across the street, lounging under the elms, as though awaiting some one. His tall figure was well wrapped in a riding-cloak, whose folds he held in a way to conceal his lower features, while his hat, slouched over his forehead, made it still more difficult to obtain a clear view of his face.

"Look at that man over there," she said nervously, clutching Dorothy's arm.

"Yes, I see," Dorothy replied with no show of

interest, as they started down the street. "What of him?"

She was paying little heed to anything about her, for the meeting with Aunt Penine had aroused to new and acute paining the sense of her own great loss.

This, thanks to the diversion afforded by her new surroundings, had begun to be a little dulled; for when one is young it is no easy matter for any sorrow, however heavy, to utterly crush out all the light and hope.

Then, too, it had seemed to Dorothy a most marvellous thing to see Aunt Penine so softened and repentant. And this of itself served to increase the homesick longing the very sight of her had brought to the girl, — a craving for the happy days of the dear old home, when a united family gathered under its roof, with no war-clouds darkening their hearts.

"I am sure he is the same man I noticed walking after us when we came; and if so, why has he been standing there all this time?"

Mary now spoke excitedly, and as though alarmed, glancing now and then over her shoulder at the cause of her fears.

"He is probably attending to his own affairs, and giving no thought to ours," Dorothy answered, without looking in the stranger's direction. "If not, what then? It will be daylight for two hours to come, and in five minutes we will be where the man is waiting for us."

Mary said nothing more, but ventured to steal a parting glance as they turned the corner of the

street; and she was much disconcerted to see the man still appearing to follow them.

They soon reached their destination and found the vehicle waiting. A minute more and they were seated, the driver gathered the reins, and his horses set off at a pace bespeaking their impatience to return to their stalls at the Gray Horse Inn.

The rain held back until they drew up in front of the entrance. Indeed it seemed as if the storm had waited for the girls to reach shelter, for no sooner were they inside the house than it let go with a sudden burst, doubtless setting in for an "all-nighter," as Johnnie Strings averred when he met them at the door.

It was impossible for them to continue their journey on horseback that night, and the landlord refused to send the carriage to Dorchester, by reason of all his horses being needed early the following morning to carry some supplies to the outposts. And so, yielding to the inevitable, Mary and Dorothy decided to pass the night at the inn, letting Johnnie Strings, who cared nothing for the storm, go on and explain matters to Mistress Knollys.

The Gray Horse Inn was an old building, whose precise age none could tell. The street whereon it stood was little more than a lane, leading off the main thoroughfare to Boston; and a person outside could easily glance through the lower windows, when these were unshuttered, as no shrubbery veiled them. Inside it was cheery and well-kept, and its rambling style of construction afforded accommodation for a surprising number of guests.

Back of the building extended a cornfield, which ended in a tract of woodland, while upon its townward side was a sturdy growth of oak and nut trees, encircling the cornfield, and running quite to the line of the woods beyond.

Mistress Trask, the landlady, gave the two girls a small parlor, communicating with a sleeping-room; and here their supper was served.

As the buxom dame brought in the well-filled tray, a loud, aggressive voice came through the open door, evidently from the taproom, where a fire blazing on the hearth — although the night was barely cold — tempted the wayfarers to congregate.

"An' I tell ye," said the unseen speaker, "that Boston is the heart an' mouth o' the colonies. The wind that blows from Boston will set every weathercock from New Hampshire to Georgia."

A silence followed, suggestive of no one caring to dispute the assertion.

Mistress Trask, noting Mary's expression of annoyance and her glance toward the door, made haste to close it. Then she explained, as she began setting the food upon the table: "That 's only farmer Gilbert. He 's a decent enough body when sober, but once he gets a bit o' liquor under his waistcoat, it seems to fly straight to his brains and addle 'em. And then he do seem fairly grieving for a fisticuff with all creation."

"I surely trust he will make no such disturbance while we are in the house," Mary said uneasily.

"Never ye have any fear, dearie," replied the good woman. She was an old acquaintance of Johnnie

Strings, and he had duly impressed her as to the high standing of the guests he left in her charge.

"Never ye fear," she repeated. "The sight of a real lady is sure to be a check on his tongue an' manners; an' I'll see to it that he knows who be in this room. 'Tis true sorry I am to have to put ye on this lower floor; but ye see, we've strict orders to keep the whole o' the upper floor for some gentry who will be here by late evening."

Then bending her head quickly, she whispered with great impressiveness, "Who, think ye, we expect?"

"I have no idea," was Mary's indifferent answer. She had scarcely heard the question, for wondering what it might be that Dorothy was thinking about as she stood by the window, from which she had drawn away the curtain.

Certain it was that the girl could distinguish nothing in the pitchy darkness outside, even if she could see through the rain-dashed panes, that looked as if encrusted with glass beads.

Mistress Trask's information — whispered, like her question, as if she feared the furniture might hear her words — caused Mary to sit very erect, with kindling eyes and indrawn breath.

"Hush-h," warned the landlady, with a broad smile of delight at the surprise she had aroused. "Hush-h; we was ordered on no account to let it get out."

"Dot, did you hear what she said?" Mary asked, when the two, left to themselves, sat down to the tempting supper.

Dorothy shook her head, wondering the while at Mary's agitation.

"She said," and Mary lowered her own voice, "that the Commander-in-Chief is to arrive here soon, and that he will stop here all night, as there is to be a meeting of some sort with many of his principal officers."

"General Washington!" A new light came to Dorothy's face, kindling a rush of color in her cheeks, and sending a glitter from her eyes that routed all their sad abstraction.

Mary nodded.

"I wish we could see him," said Dorothy. "Oh — I must get a peep at him."

"We will certainly try to see him," Mary agreed, adding eagerly, "And oh, Dot — mayhap Jack will be of them."

"And perhaps Hugh," Dorothy said impulsively. Then quickly, as she saw the sudden change in Mary's face, "Whatever is the matter with Hugh Knollys, I wonder? He has not been to see his mother since we went to stop with her; and I have noticed that whenever his name is mentioned, you and Jack — and even his mother — look oddly. Has he done anything amiss?"

"Nothing, indeed, that I know of." And Mary lifted her cup of tea so that it hid her eyes for the moment.

"I have wished so often that he would come — I should like to see him once more. How long — how very long it seems since he left us last fall!" Dorothy sighed; and Mary knew it was not for Hugh, but because of all that had happened since his going.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"OH, Mary, which one of them do you suppose is he?" whispered Dorothy, as the two girls hung over the balustrade of the upper hall, watching the figures entering through the outer door, all of them so muffled in storm-cloaks as to look precisely alike, save as to height.

The landlord, with much obsequious bustling, had hastened forward to meet them. His wife was beside him, and she had just summoned a servant to assist in taking the wet wrappings from the new arrivals as she stood courtesying before them.

"The rooms be aired, lighted, and fires made, as ordered, sir," Trask was saying.

In one hand he held aloft a clumsy brass candlestick holding three lighted candles, while the other hand was placed over his heart, as if that member needed to be repressed under the well-filled proportions of his ample waistcoat; and he was bowing with great servility before a figure whose stature far exceeded that of the other new-comers, but whose face, hidden by his hat, could not be seen by the eager onlookers at the top of the stairs.

"Oh, Dot, they are coming straight up here," Mary gasped; and both girls sprang back in dismay at sight of the procession beginning to file up the stairway, preceded by the landlord, who now carried a candlestick in either hand.

Scarcely knowing what they were doing, and intent solely upon concealing themselves, they darted through the doorway of the nearest room, which was lighted only by a cheery wood fire.

"They will surely see us as they go by," whispered Mary, for, once inside, they saw that the door by which they had entered was in the extreme corner of the room, rendering the entire interior visible to a passer-by.

"Let us shut the door," Dorothy suggested.

But Mary said quickly, "No, that will never do. The landlord may have left it open, and would notice it being closed."

It had not occurred to them that all this was probably on account of the room being one of those assigned to the new guests, for Mary had given but slight heed to what Mistress Trask said as to the entire upper floor being taken, and Dorothy had heard naught of the matter beyond what Mary told her.

"Here is another room," said the younger girl joyfully, for her alert eyes had spied a half-closed door communicating with an inner and dark apartment.

It took them only a moment to gain this place of refuge and shut the door; then, standing close to it, they listened for any sound to indicate the passage of the procession down the hall, and so leave them an opportunity to return unobserved to their own apartments.

"I wish we had never done so foolish a thing," Mary said in a low voice. She was breathing rapidly, and trembling from agitation.

"So do I — as it is," was Dorothy's hurried answer. "But if I only could have seen him, so as to know him, I should not care."

The next minute they were awakened to new dismay by the sound of heavy footsteps entering the outer room. Then they heard the landlord say, "This is the room, your Excellency; I trust it be such as to suit you."

A calm, full-toned voice replied: "Thank you, landlord; everything seems quite as it should be. The other gentlemen will be here shortly; show them up at once, when they arrive."

"Yes, sir — certainly, sir," Trask replied. "This is the bedroom, sir." And the sound of his heavy feet approaching the door caused still greater terror to the trembling girls.

The latch was actually lifted, when the other voice arrested any farther movement by saying with a note of impatience: "Yes, yes — very well, landlord. We should like supper as speedily as it can be served, and as there will be many of us, we will have it downstairs."

Trask seemed now to take his leave, for they heard the outer door close. Then the same voice, mellow and dignified as at first, came to them again.

"No doubt, Dalton, they have been detained by the storm."

"Faith, sir, 't is little such a man as Glover cares for water," replied another voice, more jovial and evidently younger; "although, to be sure, he may prefer the water to be salt, being more used to that flavor."

Mary pulled Dorothy by the arm.

"We must walk straight out of here," she whispered, "this very minute. There is nothing else for us to do."

"Well, — go on." The words came brokenly from the younger girl's lips, for her heart was beating in a way to make her actually dizzy.

Then, as Mary hesitated, Dorothy's sturdy self-reliance returned; and pushing the door wide open, she passed in front of her sister-in-law and stepped forth into the presence of four officers, wearing the uniform of the Continental army.

Three of them were wandering about the room, as though awaiting the orders of the fourth, — a very tall man, of massive frame, seated by a table.

He was examining a sealed packet, and seemed about to open it under the light of the candles, but looked up quickly as the childish figure came and stood directly in front of him. Then, as his large gray-blue eyes glanced at the taller one, he arose to his feet, with the unopened packet in his hand.

The other officers had come to a standstill, as though rooted, in various parts of the room, and stood staring open-mouthed at the fair intruders, — a very evident admiration soon taking the place of their amazement.

Their commander now addressed the two girls, looking down from his great height upon the faces wherein embarrassment and veneration seemed hopelessly mingled.

"Well, ladies," he demanded, — his words and manner, albeit perfectly respectful and courteous,

tinged with sternness — "what is the meaning of this?"

They both knew themselves to be in the presence of the great man whom they had desired so much to look upon, and they could see nothing in the room but the impressive figure now facing them with such an air of dignity and command.

There was about him the very atmosphere of self-nobility, self-reliance; and with it that supreme control which, being the ruler of his own nature, enabled him to govern all the more surely those about him. The steady gaze of the unusually large eyes, every line of the firm mouth and chin, bespoke a well-disciplined mind, and the keen intuitions of a born leader of men.

Mary was dumb from mortification, not unmixed with actual fear, for she could see no easy way of extricating themselves from their dilemma; but Dorothy plucked up heart of grace, and answered, as she dropped a little courtesy, "It is only that we wanted to see you, sir."

There was a spontaneous laugh from the three officers; but Washington checked it by turning to them with a frown.

And yet there was a faint smile touching the corners of his own lips, relaxing their severity, as he looked down at the girl and asked, in the quizzing tone he might have used toward a child, "Well, little one, now that you have seen me, what will you?"

"That you will pardon us, sir," Mary answered instantly, as she moved forward to Dorothy's side.

Washington bent his head graciously to her. But

his smiling eyes went back to the younger girl's face, although his words were now in reply to Mary.

"There is surely little to pardon. Rather let me thank you that I am held in such esteem, and thought deserving of so much consideration." Then he added with a glance that embraced them both, "May I know your names?"

"This is my sister, Dorothy Devereux, of Marblehead; and I am Mary Broughton Devereux, wife of the officer of that name in Colonel Glover's regiment, now stationed at Cambridge."

Her composure had fully returned, and she spoke with perfect freedom — indeed with a touch of pride — as she looked up fearlessly into Washington's face.

"Aye;" and now his look and voice showed naught but cordiality. "I am happy, ladies, to make your acquaintance. I happen to know your husband, Mistress Devereux, for my present headquarters at Cambridge are in the house formerly occupied by Colonel Glover and his officers.[1] I had also a slight acquaintance with your father-in-law."

"Oh, sir — you say that you knew my father?"

The lines of his face relaxed still more as he regarded the little figure standing before him, her hands clasped impulsively, and the great dark eyes, now glittering with tears, raised in a worshipful gaze more eagerly questioning than was even the sweet voice.

"Aye, child, I knew him. We met at the house of your townsman, Colonel Lee."

"He is — perhaps you do not know — my father

[1] This mansion was afterwards the home of Longfellow.

died this spring." And crystal drops welled from the big eyes and hung suspended on the curling lashes.

"Aye, my dear child," and a note of the tenderest sympathy came to the deep voice, "so I heard at the time. God grant we may all be as well prepared as was your good father, when the end shall come."

There was a pause, filled by the crackling of the fire, whose gleams made a bright sparkle of the drops on Dorothy's swart lashes before she could wipe them away. The other officers were now exchanging significant glances, and looking at the girl with much interest.

The silence was broken by Mary, who was secretly burning to escape. She had waited until she met Washington's eyes; then, as he glanced at her, she made a deep courtesy and said, "And now, sir, if you please, we will retire to our own apartments below stairs."

"Wait but a moment," he replied. His eyes had gone back to Dorothy, who was standing with clasped hands, looking into the fire, and forgetful of all else than the sorrow his words had awakened within her heart. "Are you abiding under this roof, Mistress Devereux?"

"Only for this one night, sir," Mary answered. "We are stopping at Dorchester, with our old friend Mistress Knollys, and have been toward Boston to see a dying relative. We were returning from there when the storm overtook us, and are obliged to remain here until to-morrow. We shall set out again in the morning, sir."

"Not alone, surely?" he said with a slight frown. "It is scarce prudent for you two young ladies to be travelling these roads, at such a time as this, without escort."

"We had an escort, sir, but he went on to Dorchester, to assure Mistress Knollys of our safety. He will return in the morning, or else send some one for us."

"That is more as it should be," Washington said with an approving nod. "And in case no one comes for you, I myself will take pleasure in seeing that you are provided with a suitable escort."

Mary courtesied once more, and both girls murmured their thanks.

The sad look had departed from Dorothy's face as she now stood watching the great man whom she might never have the opportunity of beholding again; and while so engaged, it happened that one of the buttons of his coat came directly opposite her small nose.

At first she looked at it without any interest, — almost mechanically. Then she was overcome by a sudden intense desire to possess it as a souvenir, to be treasured for all time to come.

The feeling grew stronger each moment, and there is no saying to what lengths her childish impulsiveness might have spurred her, had it not been for the keen looks bent upon her by the officers at the other side of the room.

Washington seemed to be conscious of this, for his eyes took a curious expression as he said, looking down into the girl's earnest face, "I am tempted to

ask, little one, what great subject makes your eyes so solemn."

He spoke more than half jestingly, and it was apparent that he judged her to be much younger than her actual years, because of her diminutive stature and childish appearance.

"I was wishing, sir, that you would give me something to remember you by," was her frank answer; "that is," — hesitating a little — "I was wishing I could have something to keep all my life."

She stopped, scarcely knowing how to express herself, while Mary stared at her with manifest disapproval.

"I understand, my child," Washington said, now looking at her more gravely.

He paused, and seemed to be considering the matter. Then he laid his hand lightly upon the girl's shoulder, much in the way a father would have done.

"I shall take pleasure, little one, in giving you something by which to remember me."

Resuming his seat by the table, he took up the packet he was examining when they interrupted him a few minutes before.

He now opened it hastily, and a number of papers dropped out.

One of these he picked up, and tore from it a strip, which he looked at carefully, as though to be certain it was clear of writing; then, dipping a quill into the ink, he wrote a few words upon it.

"Take this, my child," he said, extending it to her, "and should you ever be in need of any service

within my power to render, you have but to send this slip of paper, to remind me that I have promised to assist you."

Dorothy stood speechless, well-nigh bewildered, her eyes fixed upon his face, now alight with an aspect almost paternal.

She said nothing, did not even thank him; but taking the paper, she pressed her lips to the hand that proffered it, and then, turning quickly, sped from the room.

"We are most honored, sir — you are very kind," said Mary, who felt it incumbent upon her to express their gratitude in more formal fashion than Dorothy had adopted.

Washington was looking at the door through which the girl had disappeared, but now he turned and bowed courteously.

"Much of the obligation is my own," he replied with courtly gallantry. Then his manner changed as he said: "Your sister is a sweet little maid, — it is most sad that she should have lost her father. He was, as is his son, a worthy and stanch patriot. These are troublous times, Mistress Devereux, and one so young and charming as she may come to feel the need of a protector; although, from all I have seen of her brother — your husband — it might well be supposed my own poor services would never be called into use."

"I thank you, sir; and I am sure Dorothy does the same — and both of us with all our hearts." And Mary ventured to extend her hand.

Washington arose from his chair, and his large,

strong fingers closed about her own slender ones in a firm clasp, which she felt still tingling in their tips when she found Dorothy waiting for her at the head of the stairs.

"Oh, Mary," she burst out, looking as though something were amiss, "I am glad you are come. I 've been so affrighted."

Then, as they started down the stairs, she told how a dreadful-appearing man had come out of the taproom, and stood glaring at her, as he demanded fiercely to know her business.

"I was so scared that I could not speak, and I did not dare go back into the room. I am sure the man was full of drink."

"Where is he? I see no one." And Mary craned her neck to look over the rail into the hall below.

"He went back into the taproom when he found I would not answer him."

They had now reached the foot of the staircase; and as though waiting for the clicking of their high heels on the oaken floor, the taproom door opened suddenly, and a great hulking fellow, with a red face, topped by a wild shock of black hair, came staggering against them.

Both girls cried out, and started to fly up the stairs. But they were reassured by the advent of Mistress Trask, who chanced to be coming down the hall, and who spoke sharply to the man, bidding him have a care how he ran into ladies.

"'T is only Farmer Gilbert," she said, turning to her frightened guests, and seeming surprised to find

them in that part of the house. "There 's no cause to be alarmed, my pretties."

Mary glanced with disgust at the drunkard, who was now attempting a maudlin apology. But she said nothing, either to him or to the landlady, and went her way with Dorothy.

No sooner had they closed the door of their own apartments than they hurried to the light and examined the precious slip of paper.

It read: "A solemn promise given to Mistress Dorothy Devereux, of Marblehead. G. Washington."

"Oh, Dot," Mary exclaimed, "I never thought, — we have told him an untruth!"

Dorothy was still looking at the paper, but at Mary's alarming words she raised her eyes in wonder.

"You are not Mistress Dorothy Devereux, but Mistress —"

"Sh-h!" cried Dot, putting her hand quickly over Mary's lips. Then they looked at one another and laughed, but uneasily.

CHAPTER XXIX

NEITHER of the girls found much rest during the night, owing to the strangeness of their surroundings and the exciting experiences that had come to them. In addition to this, their wakefulness was increased by the noise of the gale outside.

The rain had ceased, but the wind at times attained such violence as to rattle the casements like the jarring of a cannonade. Then its force would lessen, and it would moan about the gables and down the chimneys with a sound as though the patriots already fallen might be lamenting the long-continued siege of Boston.

With these deeper tones there would come loud shrieks, like the laughter of fiends, as if the Prince of Darkness and his legions were making merry over the impending downfall of goodly customs, uprooted by slaughter and bloodshed.

During the earlier part of the night there was some unusually loud talking outside, seeming to indicate a new excitement.

This caused the girls fresh alarm; but the matter was explained by the landlady, when she brought their breakfast in the morning.

A redcoat had been caught in the cornfield back of the house, and later on, his horse was found fastened in the woods near by.

When brought, as he was at once, before the Commander-in-Chief, the prisoner had denied indignantly the imputation of being a spy. Yet he had refused stubbornly to explain the reason for his being outside his own lines, and so close to the spot where a conference was being held between Washington and his officers.

He wore the British uniform, but this was concealed by an ordinary riding-cloak, and on his head was a civilian's hat.

"So," said the landlady, after telling the story, "if he be no spy, 't will be a hard matter for him to prove it, with everything lookin' so black. An', oh, mistress, he 's as handsome as a picter, an' don't look to be twenty-five. It do seem a mortal pity that he must hang."

"Hang!" repeated Dorothy, with horror. "Why must he hang?"

"Why, surely ye know, mistress," the woman explained, "in war-times a spy be always hanged."

"Is it not dreadful — and will they hang him?" Mary asked with a shudder, staring into the face of the voluble landlady, who was now arranging the dishes upon the table.

"So the talk goes 'mongst the men. They had much ado with Farmer Gilbert, who was for takin' the young man an' hangin' him there an' then. But he had to be brought afore General Washington himself. An' now he 's locked up in one o' the upper rooms, with Tommy Macklin pacin' up an' down afore the door, like he was measurin' the hall for a new carpet, 'stead o' wearin' out the strip I wove with my own hands, out o' rags."

Dorothy, who sat facing Mary, her elbows on the table, and her chin resting in her small palms, now drew the landlady's attention by inquiring if she knew the prisoner's name.

"Yes,—I did get to hear it when General Washington asked him; for, to say truth, I was listenin' outside the door. He answered up fair enough, an' spoke it like there was naught to be ashamed of in the matter, neither. 'T was Captain Southorn."

She heard a half-choked gasp from Dorothy's lips, and saw the look that came to Mary's face as her eyes turned like a flash toward the younger girl.

"Is it possible he can be known to ye?" she asked quickly.

"Yes,—I think we met him once," Mary answered falteringly. "That is, we met a young man of the same name. But he was not a captain — only a cornet of dragoons."

"Still, it is like to be the same man," the landlady said rather insistingly, as though hoping that such was the fact. "Cornets grow quick to be captains in these woful days, if they be but brave, which surely this young man is, unless his looks belie him."

Neither of the girls had paid any attention to her, but sat motionless, each with her eyes riveted upon the other's face, as if seeking to read her thoughts.

But now they both looked at Mistress Trask, whose voice had lost its speculative tone, and was filled with intense earnestness.

"Oh, mistress," she was saying, still addressing Mary, "mayhap he be the same man ye 've known. An' if this be so, I do beg ye to try what prayin' the

favor of his pardon from Washington will do. 'T is a foul death — to be hanged; an' such as he ought surely to die in their beds, unless they come to die in battle. The General be still here, 'though Colonel Glover an' many o' the other officers left early this mornin'. If they should take the young man out an' hang him, I 'd never 'bide here another day. Will ye not go, mistress, an' try to save his life?"

Before Mary could reply, Dorothy spoke up.

"I will go," she said quietly, taking her elbows from the table, and with an expression in her eyes such as Mary never saw there before.

"Oh, do, mistress!" the landlady exclaimed eagerly, looking at the girl with admiration. "Pray do, an' God will bless ye for it."

But Mary protested, although weakly, and feeling that she had but little hope of success.

"No, Dot,— no," she said. "You must not, — it would never do. And then it might not be the same one, after all."

But her own belief contradicted her words, and sounded in her voice even as she uttered them. She was certain it was he who had appeared to be watching them when they came from Aunt Penine; and he had doubtless followed them to the tavern.

Dorothy made no reply until she drained a glass of milk the landlady filled for her; then she arose from the table.

"I am going," she said, as calmly as before. "Please," seeing that Mary was about to renew her objections, "say no more about it. I am going — and I prefer to go alone."

But Mary could not restrain herself.

"Oh Dot," she asked tremulously, "do you dare do such a thing?"

"Yes, I dare do it, because I must, — because there is nothing else for me to do."

"Let her go, mistress," urged the landlady; "surely there be naught to fear for her." Then she said confidently, as Dorothy passed through the door and out into the hall: "She be that young an' tender that no one would harm her, — least of all, General Washington. No doubt she 'll be just the one to touch his heart with her pleadin' for the young man. No one would have the heart to say no to her, she be so little an' sweet."

Mary felt her own helplessness to turn Dorothy from her purpose. Indeed she did not dare to say, even to herself, that it was not the girl's solemn duty to do as she had proposed.

And so she sat silent, with clasped hands, musing over all these things, while Mistress Trask removed the dishes. And while she was doing this, the landlady told for the first time — the excitement having driven it from her mind — how Johnnie Strings had appeared at an early hour, and bade her say that he was forced to go across country to carry a despatch, but would return by noon, to escort the two girls to Dorchester.

Dorothy took her way up the stairs toward the room above. All the girlishness within her was now dead, and the expression in her pale face was that of a woman — and one whose heart was wrung by bitter sorrow.

The door was closed, and in front of it a man was seated. A musket lay across his knees, and his head was sunk on his breast as if he were buried in his own meditations. But as Dorothy drew near, he looked up, and she saw that it was none other than Fisherman Doak.

"Mistress Dorothy!" he gasped, staring open-mouthed at her white face as though doubtful of her being a reality.

"Yes," she said quickly, "and I am glad it is you, Doak."

"Sweet little mistress," he exclaimed, amazement showing in every lineament of his honest visage, "in Heaven's name, whatever be ye doin' here?"

"Never mind, Doak," she answered, "what I am doing here. I wish to see — to speak with General Washington, and at once."

"You — you?" he stammered, rising slowly to his feet, and shaking himself in the effort to collect his scattered wits.

"Yes," she said impatiently. "You are on guard here — he knows you are outside his door?"

"Why, yes, mistress — o' course. I'm to be here in case he needs aught, as well as to keep folk out. He be alone, an' has ordered thet he's not to be disturbed."

"If he is alone," and her tone expressed relief, "so much the better for me. I must have speech with him this very minute."

Doak opened his mouth in remonstrance, but she would not permit him to speak.

"Do you hear?" she demanded. "I must see him

this minute. Go and tell him so; and tell him it is upon a matter of life and death."

He said nothing more, but, looking more dazed than ever, turned and rapped on the door.

A voice whose deep tones had not yet left Dorothy's ears gave permission to enter, and Doak, after bidding her to stop where she was, went into the room.

For a second Dorothy stood hesitating. Then a look of fixed resolution came to her face, and before the door could close after the fisherman-soldier, she stepped forward and followed him.

Washington was — as when she intruded upon him before — seated at a table. But now he was writing; and as the two entered the room, he looked up as though annoyed at the interruption.

But Dorothy, pushing Doak aside, advanced with an impetuosity that gave no opportunity for questioning or reproof, and took away all need of explanation from the astonished guardian of the great man's privacy.

"You gave me this, sir — last night," she said, holding out the paper, and speaking in the same fearless, trusting manner she would have adopted toward her own father, "and you will surely remember what you promised."

As she came forward, Washington, seeing who it was, laid down his pen, and his face took the expression it had borne when he was talking with her the evening before. There was a tender, a welcoming light in his eyes, as though her coming were a pleasure, — as if it brought relief from the contemplation of the grave responsibilities resting upon him.

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He arose from his chair, and taking the paper from her hand, laid it upon the table. Then he turned to her again and said smilingly, "My dear child, the promise was surely of small worth if I could forget it so soon after it was given."

But there was no smile upon the face into which he was looking, and its earnestness seemed now to bring to him the conviction that the girl had come upon no trifling matter.

He bade Doak resume his post outside the door, and to permit no one to enter, howsoever important the business might be. Then, when the fisherman had gone, he invited Dorothy to be seated, and asked her to tell him the object of her coming.

He sat down again by the table, but she remained standing, and now came close to him, her clasped hands and pleading eyes fully as beseeching as the words in which she framed her petition.

"Oh, sir — I have come to beg that you will not hang the English officer whom I hear you suspect of being a spy."

Washington started in surprise; a stern light gathered in his eyes, and he looked as though illy pleased.

Dorothy was quick to see this, and felt that her only hope of success lay in telling him the entire truth.

This she did, confiding in him as freely and fully as though she were his daughter.

When she ended, he sat for a time as if pondering over her story, and the request to which it was the sequel. He had not interrupted her by so much as a

single word, but his eyes had been fixed upon her face with an intensity that softened as she went on, in her own impulsive way, to tell him of her troubles.

Presently he said: "It is truly a sad tangle, my child, — one scarce proper to think any gentleman would seek to bring into your young life. But I am not yet old enough to hold that we should judge hot-headed youth with too great severity. Indeed," the grave lines of his face relaxing a little, "in this case I can see that the young man had strong temptation to forget himself, and to do as he did."

He paused and looked at her keenly, as if searching for the answer to a question seeking solution in his own mind.

She stood silently waiting, and he continued: "First of all, I must know of a certainty as to one matter, in order that I may act with discretion. My child," and he took one of her hands in his own, "do not fear to show me your heart. Show it to me as you would to your own dear father, were he, rather than I, asking you. Tell me — do you love this man who is really your husband?"

"Yes, sir," she answered, with no sign of hesitancy, as she lifted her head and looked at him through the tears his words had brought to her eyes, "I do love him."

Washington smiled, as if relieved of a perplexing problem.

"This brings about a very different order of affairs," he said in a way that made her heart bound with hope. "Now it may be possible that this captain is

not your Cornet Southorn, although I think there is small room for doubt in the matter. But, in order to solve the question, I will have him brought here. Do you, my child, conceal yourself behind the curtains of that window; and if he proves to be the officer of whom we have been speaking, you have but to show yourself to assure me of the fact. If not, then remain in hiding; and after putting a few questions to him, I will have him taken back to his room."

Doak was despatched to carry out the order, while Dorothy hid herself in the curtains, — trembling with agitation when the sound of footsteps was heard again outside the door.

The fisherman entered with the prisoner, and Dorothy, looking through the slightly parted drapery, saw the olive face and purple-blue eyes of the man she loved.

His long boots were splashed with the mire of the highway, his uniform showed traces of the struggle of the night before, and his curly hair was dishevelled.

More than this, his haggard face and dark-circled eyes gave proof of a sleepless and anxious night.

But as he came into the room he drew himself erect, and met unflinchingly the stern eyes of the man in whose hands lay his fate.

The door had no sooner closed upon Doak's retreating figure than Dorothy stepped from behind the curtains.

The young man gave a violent start, and the arms that had been folded across his chest fell to his sides, as he uttered her name, — at the same time taking a

step toward her. Then he came to a standstill, and passed his hand over his eyes, as if to clear them of something that impeded his vision.

And there was reason for this, as Dorothy did not speak, and stood motionless, her hands clasped in front of her, while she looked at him with an expression he seemed unable to define.

Washington's face had grown less severe as he noted all this; and while the two still remained gazing at one another, his voice broke the silence.

"The cause of your presence in this neighborhood, Captain Southorn, which your gallantry forbade you to explain, even in the face of an ignominious death, has been revealed to me by one whose truth and fidelity no human being should know better than yourself. She has told me that which leads me to take upon myself the responsibility of clearing you from the very grave suspicions aroused by your action of last night, and of holding you simply as a prisoner of war. For all this, you have Mistress Dorothy to thank — for your life and your restored honor."

No pen can describe the emotions of the two listeners as they heard these words, nor could any pencil portray the reflection of these emotions upon their faces.

Southorn's expression was that of thankfulness, mingled with amazement, — doubt, as though he feared the treachery of his own senses, while Dorothy's face became all aglow with delight and triumph at her success.

The young man stepped impetuously toward Wash-

ington, and was about to speak, but the latter raised his hand.

"You, sir, as an officer of the King," he said gravely, "know the weight of such a debt as this, and no words of mine can add to the sense of your obligation to her. This being so," and he glanced from one to the other of them, while the suggestion of a smile relieved the sternness of his face, "I will leave you with her for a short time, in order that you may express your gratitude in fitting terms, while I consider what course is best for me to pursue in carrying out the purpose I have in view."

With this he arose from his chair, and bowing to them, withdrew to the inner room, closing the door after him.

For a single moment there was silence between the two he had left alone, and no one could now accuse Dorothy of any lack of color in her cheeks.

"Dorothy — sweetheart, what does all this mean?"

The young man spoke in almost a whisper, looking at her as though she were a vision, a part of some strange dream. His voice faltered, and his eyes moved restlessly as he came toward her, walking slowly and uncertainly.

But Dorothy, her wonted self-possession and courage now fully restored, did not wait for him to come to her. She advanced smilingly, her eyes alight with happiness, and laid both her hands within his.

Then, while they stood face to face, she told him hurriedly of what she had done.

While she was speaking, he looked at her in that

same queer way, his eyes wandering over her face and figure, while now and again he pressed her little soft hands, as though to gain through them still greater assurance of the blessed reality.

But when she finished, his eyes ceased their roaming, and became fixed upon her beaming face.

"My darling," he said slowly, "do you realize the full measure of what you have done for me? Do you know that you not only have given me life, but have saved me from that which to a soldier is more terrible than the torments of hell itself, — the disgrace of being hanged as a spy?"

His voice broke, and a spasm of pain shot across his face. Then he exclaimed in a tone filled with self-condemnation, "And this you have done for the man who forced his love upon you, — who married you by a trick — aye, by violence; the man who — "

She drew one hand away from his grasp and put it firmly against his lips.

"Stop!" she commanded, with all her natural imperiousness. "I 'll listen to no more talk such as that. Had you not married me in the way you did, 't is not likely you would have wed me at all, for I have come to know that I am no girl to be won by soft speeches, and sighs, and tears."

"What!" he cried, not believing his ears. "Can it be possible — "

He had no need to finish the question, for her arms stole up and went around his neck, and her blushing face was hidden over his heart.

"My love — my wife — can it be that you love me at last?"

"At last!" She lifted her head and looked into his eyes. "I believe I have loved you from the very first — since the time you opened your eyes when I held your head that day on the rocks. I loved you when you kissed me, the time we met in the wood, and I loved you when we stood before Parson Weeks; and — I 'll love you all my life."

He drew her to him with a force almost rough in its fierceness, and covered her face with kisses.

"God be praised for those words!" he exclaimed. Then he sighed deeply.

"I have been such a miserable dog, sweetheart, ever since the night I left Marblehead. I was hoping until then to receive some little word bidding me come to you, — to come and tell your people the truth, and face their opinion and anger, such as I deserved for what I had done. But after I left you that night, I lost all hope, and prayed only that a bullet might set me free from my self-reproaches and misery."

"Oh — you wicked —" Dorothy began; but he silenced her with a kiss.

"I have just received tidings of my father's illness, and his wish for my return," he continued, "and was thinking of setting sail for home, when my eyes were blessed with sight of you yesterday, and I was dragged out here by a force I was unable to resist. I hoped to have speech with you somehow, if only that I might implore your forgiveness before I went away."

"And now you know there is naught to forgive," she said, smiling up into his face.

Then she drew herself a little away from him, and taking hold of the collar of his red coat as though to detain him, added softly, "But you 'll not go now, will you?"

He laughed exultingly; but his face became sad again as he stroked the ripples of curling hair clustering about her forehead.

"It would seem, sweetheart," he said, "as if that might be the wisest course for me to pursue; for how can I find heart to take up arms against the country and people — aye, against the very kindred — of my own wife?"

A look of sorrowing dread swept all the light from Dorothy's face; but the brightness returned somewhat as he said more cheerily: "Well, well, my little one, it is waste of time to talk of such matters now, for you see I am not free to go anywhere just at this present. 'Sufficient for the day,' you know, 'is the evil thereof;' and surely we have evil to fear, even yet. But nothing can daunt me now — now that my honor is cleared; and that, too, by such an unlooked-for ray of light from Heaven, and with it the knowledge that you love me, and dared so bravely to save my life."

The door-knob was now rattled with a warning significance, and the two sprang away from each other as General Washington slowly entered the room.

His face bore an odd expression, and one that was pleasant to look upon, as he glanced from Dorothy to her husband. Then his eyes returned to the girl's face, and he asked, with no attempt to conceal a smile, "Well, my child, is all settled to

your satisfaction, and" — after a second's pause — "liking?"

She tried to answer him, but could not. Her heart was too overflowing with gratitude, happiness, hope.

They all seemed struggling for precedence in the words that should come from her lips, and she found herself unable to speak.

Her eyes filled, and she looked up as though imploring him to find in her face all that her lips failed to say. Then she sprang forward, and seizing his hand, pressed it to her lips.

He appeared to understand fully the cause of her silence and agitation, — to know and appreciate the emotions that rendered her dumb; and the lines of his face resumed their accustomed gravity as he withdrew his hand from her clasp and laid it gently upon the curly head so far beneath his own majestic height.

"God bless you, my daughter, and keep you — always!"

No father could have spoken more tenderly to his child; and the words came to Dorothy as a benediction from him who had so recently passed away.

Washington now addressed himself to Captain Southorn.

"You have in this child a priceless treasure," he said. "God grant that you ne'er forget the fact, nor the debt you owe her."

"I never will — I never can, sir," the young man answered with unmistakable sincerity, as he came and took his wife by the hand. "Of that, sir, you may rest assured," he added, in a voice shaking with strong emotion.

Washington bent his head in approval. "For the present," he continued, "I deem it proper that you remain as before. I purpose stopping here until afternoon, and will then have you taken to Cambridge, unless some unforeseen matter shall arise to alter my plans."

The prisoner bowed in silence; then, as Washington went toward the door to summon Doak, the young man turned to smile hopefully into his wife's eyes.

"Keep a brave heart, sweet one," he whispered, "and trust in my love and truth. Naught can ever part us now."

A minute later the door closed after the fisherman and his charge.

"Keep the paper, child," Washington said to Dorothy, as soon as they were alone, "and remember that the promise it contains is renewed for the future. In such days as are about us, it is not improbable to reckon upon its being needed again — although scarcely for a like purpose."

He smiled, as his fingers closed upon the small hand within which he placed the eventful slip of paper. "And now go, my daughter," he added, "and may God bless you. Trust in Him, and He will surely watch over your life, and make all well in the end."

CHAPTER XXX

HAD Dorothy been less absorbed by anxiety and grief when she was making her way to General Washington's apartments, she would have heard the door of the taproom open softly as she reached the foot of the stairs leading to the second floor.

Farmer Gilbert's head was thrust from the opening, and his fierce eyes watched the slight figure ascend to the landing above and turn in the direction of the rooms occupied by the Commander-in-Chief.

As soon as she was out of sight, he glanced up and down the hall, to make certain no one was near, and slipped cautiously out. Then quickly removing his heavy shoes, he stole, cat-like, up the stairway.

His progress was stayed by the voices of the girl and Doak; and raising his head until his eyes were on a level with the floor, he saw them enter the room together.

"Whatever be she up to?" he muttered. Then hearing footsteps in the hall below, he sped noiselessly up the few remaining steps, and made haste to hide himself in Mistress Trask's linen-press, standing only a short distance away, and which afforded him ample opportunity for watching, as he held the door ajar.

"Aha, my lady spy," he whispered to himself, "I 'll keep my eye on ye — an' my ears, too. Ye

can't fool Jason Gilbert, 'though ye may fool some as thinks they know more as I."

He saw Doak fetch the British prisoner, and noted the length of time the young man remained in the room whither the girl had gone.

"Aye — him outside, last night, an' she on the inside," his maudlin thoughts ran on. "They thought to hev it all their own way, — to tell the Britishers the names o' the officers that were here, an' all that was goin' on. An' now here be General Washington himself, I 'll be bound, lettin' her coax him to save t' other spy from hangin', when they both ought to be strung up together. I wish now I 'd not set up a hello that brought the men out o' the inn, but had jest given him a crack o'er the head myself, to settle the matter, an' so hev none o' this triflin', with her tryin' to pull the wool over the General's eyes. But I guess he 'll know 'em for the pair o' d——d British spies they be."

His lips moved in unworded mutterings, his eyes intent upon Doak — now sitting by the closed door — or else glancing about the hall to see if any one were approaching his place of concealment.

When Doak was again summoned within the room, Gilbert thought to improve the chance for making his escape; but seeing that the door was open a few inches, he concluded to wait. Then he saw the fisherman come out with the prisoner, and he uttered a low curse when the young man turned to meet the girl's eyes before the door closed behind him.

Before the sound of their footsteps died away down the hall, Farmer Gilbert left his hiding-place and

hastened below, sitting down on the steps to replace his shoes, as one of the women servants came along.

"Got a pebble, or summat, in my shoe," he explained, raising his head; for the girl had stopped, and was staring at him curiously.

"Did ye have to take off both shoes to find it?" she asked pertly.

He did not answer, and she passed on to the taproom, whither he followed her.

Less than an hour after this, as Mary and Dorothy were in their little parlor, talking over the recent happenings, the landlady came to announce that General Washington desired to see them at once.

They observed, as they passed along the hall, that some fresh excitement seemed to prevail, for they could see that the taproom was filled with men, many of whom were talking animatedly.

The door of Washington's room stood open, and they saw him in earnest conversation with two other officers, who withdrew as the girls entered.

He welcomed them kindly, although seeming preoccupied, — as if pressed by some new matter which disturbed him.

"A messenger has brought information that a body of the enemy is coming in this direction," he said, speaking quite hurriedly. "It is therefore prudent that we go our ways with all proper speed, and I wish to urge your own immediate departure. I regret that our routes lie in different directions; but I will send the man Doak to escort you, as it appears he is well known to your family."

Seeing the consternation in the girls' faces, he added reassuringly: "There is no cause for alarm, for you have ample time to put a safe distance between yourselves and the approaching British. I think it probable they will halt for a time here, at the tavern, for this seems to be their objective point."

"Do you think there is like to be a battle?" Mary inquired nervously.

Washington smiled at her fears.

"No," he answered. "It is but a moderate-sized force — probably reconnoitring. We shall, I trust, have the enemy well out of Boston erelong, without the risk or slaughter of a battle."

Then he added: "But we are losing valuable time, and I have something more pleasant than battles to speak about. I take it, Mistress Devereux," — and he turned to Mary, — "that your little sister here has made you aware of what passed between us but an hour ago?"

"Yes, sir." And Mary stole a side glance at Dorothy, wondering that the girl should appear so self-possessed.

"Captain Southorn will go with me to Cambridge," he continued, "where his ultimate disposition will be decided upon."

Dorothy started; but looking at Washington, she saw a smile in the kindly glance bent upon her troubled face.

"He will also meet Lieutenant Devereux there, and this I deem a desirable thing for all concerned. So take heart, Mistress Dorothy, and trust that all will end happily."

He looked at his watch, and then held out a hand to each of them.

"Get you under way for Dorchester at once," he said, "and you shall hear something from me within the week."

With this he led them to the door and bade them God speed, warning them once more to make haste in leaving the inn.

When they had put on their riding-hats, and gathered up their few belongings, the two girls left their room in company with Mistress Trask, who, between the excitement of seeing her distinguished guests depart, and the unusual exercise attending the concealment of her choicest viands from the approaching enemy, was well-nigh speechless.

Emerging from the narrow passage leading to the main hall of the inn, they encountered a small knot of men looking curiously at Captain Southorn and the two soldiers guarding him, who were standing at the foot of the staircase, apart from the others, and were apparently waiting for orders, while outside the open door several other men were gathered, in charge of a dozen or more horses.

As Mary's glance fell upon the young Englishman, she flushed a little, and holding her chin a bit higher than before, turned her eyes in another direction — but not until he saw the angry flash in them.

A faint smile touched his lips as he lifted his hat, and then an eager look came to his eyes as he saw the small figure following close behind her, whose steps seemed to falter as she neared him.

Just then there was a call from above stairs; and

as one of the guards ascended hastily to answer it, Captain Southorn said something in a low tone to the other one — quite a young man — standing beside him.

He listened, and then shook his head, but hesitatingly, as he glanced toward Dorothy, who was looking wistfully at his prisoner.

Good Mistress Trask had chanced to overhear what the Britisher said; and speaking to the young soldier, she exclaimed testily: "Fiddlesticks, Tommy Macklin! Why not let him speak a word to the young lady, when he asks ye so polite-like? What harm can come of it? They be old acquaintances."

Tommy seemed to waver; but being a good-hearted young fellow, as well as standing somewhat in awe of the landlady, who was a distant relative, he made no farther objection, and nodded his consent.

Southorn gave Mistress Trask a grateful smile, and stepping quickly to where Dorothy was standing, took her hand and led her a few steps away from the others, as he asked in a low voice, "Do you know what is to be done with me, sweetheart?"

"Only that you are to go to Cambridge," was the hurried reply.

"I knew that much myself," he said smilingly. "But what is the meaning of all this sudden stir?"

"They say the — British are marching toward the inn," she whispered, her mind troubled by the fear that she had no right to give him this information.

He drew a quick breath; and she readily divined the thoughts that caused him to frown, and bite his lips.

"General Washington said you would meet my brother at Cambridge, and that it was best to — best for — that it was important for you to see him," she added stammeringly, while her color deepened.

The scowl left his face, and he smiled at her in a way to make her eyes seek the floor.

"Aha! did he, indeed? Well then, no doubt it is best that I am going to Cambridge, and as soon as may be. But," with some anxiety, "what think you this brother of yours will say to me, or will a bullet be all he will have for my hearing?"

"No, indeed no!" Dorothy exclaimed. "Jack would never show you unkindness, for he knows — he well knows, because I told him —"

"Do you mean to say," he asked quickly, cutting short her words, "that your brother has known all this time the blessed truth that I learned only this very morning?"

"He only knew of it just before he left home in the summer," she whispered. "I had to tell him."

"Why?"

"I was afraid you and he might meet, and I was fearful that —" The voice died away, and Dorothy's head drooped.

"Sweetheart," he said softly, "I understand. You must have been sadly torn betwixt your love and what you thought to be your duty. It makes me realize more keenly what a brute I have made of myself. But trust me — only trust and believe in my honor and true love, and I will try all my life to make amends for the suffering I have caused you."

Washington and his suite were now descending the

stairs, and Tommy Macklin hastened to place himself closer to his prisoner as the other soldier joined him.

Then Southorn turned to Dorothy and said: "It is evident that we are about to leave. Tell me quickly as to your own movements, — you surely are not going to stop here?"

"Oh no; Mary and I are to set out right away for Dorchester, and Fisherman Doak is to see us safely housed with Mistress Knollys."

"You will go at once," he insisted, "and not delay a second?"

She nodded smilingly, and their eyes spoke the farewell their lips were forbidden to utter.

Mary had been standing all this time alongside Mistress Trask, her face studiously averted from the two at whom nearly all the others were staring wonderingly.

She now came forward, and without looking at Captain Southorn, joined Dorothy; and in company with the landlady they passed through the door into the midday sunlight flooding the world outside.

Washington and those with him were the first to leave, — their departure being witnessed by every one at the inn.

The two girls were now standing side by side in the doorway; and Captain Southorn, on horseback, with a mounted guard on either side of him, smiled again as his glance fell on Mary's spirited face, and at the thought it awakened of that morning at the Sachem's Cave.

"They be goin' to take the spy to Cambridge, to hang him," muttered Farmer Gilbert to Mistress Trask, his restless eyes roving from the sweet young face in the doorway to that of the young man sitting upon the horse.

"No such thing," said the landlady, with an indignant sniff. "He is a prisoner, but there 's no further talk o' hangin'."

"Who says so?" and the farmer's scowling brows grew blacker.

"The young ladies say so, an' they both know him — knew him long ago."

"Aye, that I 'll be bound, as to one of 'em, at any rate," he growled, eying Dorothy savagely. The girl's face was telling her secret, while she stood watching her husband turn for a parting smile as he rode off with the others.

"Where do she live?" Gilbert asked suddenly, jerking his thumb toward the doorway, in front of which Doak was now standing with the horses.

"Down at Marblehead, when they be at home; both of 'em live there," the landlady answered. "But they be stoppin' at Dorchester now, with friends, an' there 's where they 're bound for." With this she turned away, her manner showing that she desired no further parley with him.

The man stood for a few moments, as if reflecting upon what he had heard. Then, with one more glance at the two girls, he turned slowly about, and took his way to the stables of the inn.

CHAPTER XXXI

DOAK and his charges had gone but a short distance when the sound of hoofs behind them caused all three to turn, wondering who might be approaching.

It was a man, evidently an American by his appearance; and as they looked back at him, he seemed to check the hitherto brisk gait of his horse.

Dorothy was the first to recognize him.

"Oh, Mary, 't is that dreadful man who frightened us!"

"Frightened ye?" echoed Doak, interrogatively. "How was that, mistress?"

When Mary explained what had taken place the night before, he glanced back again, and saw that the distance between them was rapidly increasing, for the man in the rear was letting his horse walk, while he sat swinging loosely in the saddle.

"There be naught to fear now," he said, in a way to reassure the two girls. "He 's not like to think o' tryin' any frightenin' game with me. An' he rides like he had too much store o' liquor aboard to be thinkin' of aught but keepin' firm hold on his craft." Then, when he had looked again, "He be fallin' way behind, so there 's no call for bein' fright'ed, either one o' ye."

They soon lost sight of the stranger, and without further happening arrived safely at their destination,

to receive a motherly welcome from Mistress Knollys, who had been most anxious concerning them, knowing how the roads were infested with stragglers from both armies.

She insisted upon Doak alighting to take some refreshment; and he, nothing loath, did so, while she wrote a letter to her son for the fisherman to carry back to Cambridge.

Dorothy and Mary also improved the opportunity to write to Jack, Dot even venturing to enclose a little missive for Captain Southorn, which she begged her brother to deliver.

It was her first love letter, although so demure and prim in its wording as scarcely to deserve that name. But a loyal affection breathed through it, praying him to hope, and to trust in Washington's friendship for them.

Mistress Knollys listened with widening eyes to Mary's account of their interview with the great man, — for she invested him with all the power of His Gracious Majesty, and regarded him with more awe than ever she had King George himself.

She laughed outright over the description of their having been caught in his apartments, and asked to see the paper he had given Dorothy, touching it as something most sacred.

Dorothy had gone above stairs, leaving Mary and the good woman together in the living-room, where the afternoon sunshine poured across the floor in broad slants from the two windows opening upon the garden at the rear of the house.

Presently Mistress Knollys said, "It would seem,

my dear, to be the very best outcome for Dorothy's matter, the way things have befallen."

"Yes," Mary assented with a sigh, "so it does."

"And yet," added the old lady, "I fear it will be hard for the little maid, with a brother and husband fighting against one another."

"Ah, but you forget, dear Mistress Knollys, that he told her he thought of setting sail for his home in England."

"And then I suppose she would go with him."

"Aye;" and Mary sighed again. "I think she will surely wish to do this."

"Well, well, my dear," said Mistress Knollys, speaking more briskly, "that is not like to be right away, as he must await his exchange as a prisoner, and there's no telling when that will come to pass. Let us borrow no trouble until we know the end, which, after all, may be a happy one."

It was the fourth day after this that Mary was gladdened by the sight of her husband riding up in front of Mistress Knollys' door; and with him were Hugh and a dozen other stout fellows on horseback.

He explained that they had but a short time to tarry, and were come at Washington's command, to carry Dorothy back with them to Cambridge.

"Hey, you little mischief, see the stir you are guilty of making, — getting half the camp by the ears with your goings on," he said laughingly, and in a way to set at rest all her misgivings, as he took her in his arms.

"But what am I to go to Cambridge for?" she asked rather nervously, still with her arms around his

neck, and holding back her head to get a better look at his face, in which a serious expression seemed to be underlying its usual brightness.

"Did I not tell you, — because General Washington sent us to fetch you? But come," he added more gravely, "we must get away at once. Hasten and get yourself ready and I will tell you all as we ride along."

"Had I not better go with her?" asked Mary, when Dot had left them.

Her husband shook his head. "No, it was only Dot we were to bring."

"But for her to go alone, with a lot of men —" Mary began.

He put an arm around her shoulder as he interrupted her remonstrances.

"She goes with her brother, sweetheart, and to meet her husband."

"But she is coming back?" And Mary spoke very anxiously.

"Aye, she 'll return sometime to-morrow; but for how long is for herself and the other to decide."

Then he explained: "The British have a man of ours, one Captain Pickett, a valiant soldier, with a stout arm and true heart. They have had him these three months, a prisoner in Boston, and we have been most anxious to bring about his exchange. General Washington has now arranged this through Southorn, who is to return to-morrow to Boston, and Captain Pickett is to be sent to us. After that, as I have said, we have no right to dictate Dorothy's movements. Captain Southorn has told me that he should return to England as soon as may be."

"Then," said Mary in a tone of conviction, and the tears springing to her eyes, "Dot will go with him."

"Aye, belike," he sighed, "for they love one another truly."

"And you, Jack, do you — can you look at and speak to this man with any tolerance?" demanded his wife, the asperity of her voice seeming to dry away the tears.

"I try to do so, for Dot's sake, and for what he is to her. I've found him to be a gentleman, and a right manly fellow, despite the prank of which he was guilty."

"Well, I shall hate him the longest day I live!"

Mary could say nothing more, for Mistress Knollys and Hugh now came in from another room, where they had been together.

Dorothy had passed this room on her way up the stairs, and seeing Hugh, stopped, while he came forward quickly to meet her.

"Oh, Hugh, but I am truly glad to see you once more!" she exclaimed. "How long, how very long it seems since you went away!" And there were tears shining in the eyes she raised to his face.

He clasped both her extended hands, and reminding himself of all he had heard, strove to hide his true feelings, while his mother, from the room back of them, watched the two in silence, still seeming to hear the cry he had uttered only a moment before, —

"Oh, mother, mother, I feel that my heart will break!"

Dorothy could not but observe the paleness of his face, and the traces as of recent tears showing about

the blue eyes; but she attributed these to other than the real cause, — perhaps to matters arising between his mother and himself after their long separation.

"I am glad you have missed me sufficiently to make the time seem long to you, Dot," he replied, well aware, in the bitterness of his own heart, of how little this had to do with her show of emotion.

"Aye, I have missed you very much," she declared earnestly. "And so many sad things have happened since!"

"Yes — and so many that are not sad," he added significantly, desiring, since he might be expected to speak of her marriage, to have it over with.

A burning blush deepened the color in her cheeks. She drew away the hands he had been holding all this time, her eyes fell, and she seemed scarcely to know how to reply.

"I pray God you will be very happy, Dorothy." And his speaking her full name accentuated the gravity of his voice and manner.

"Thank you, Hugh," she replied, trying to smile; then, with a nervous laugh, "And when you return to Marblehead and see Polly Chine, I hope I may say the same to you."

The young man forced a laugh that well-nigh choked him. It had been hard enough to endure before he saw her. But even when he knew from her brother of her being forced into a marriage with this Britisher, his heart refused to relinquish all hope, despite what his friend had told him of Dorothy's own feeling toward her husband.

But he had still cherished the idea that somehow, in some way, they might never come together again; that the Britisher, believing Dorothy to have no love for him, might sail away to England without her, should the fortune of war spare him to do this.

He also reckoned — hoped, rather — that the girl was so young as to recover from any sentiment this stranger might have awakened within her heart.

But now, in the light of what had come about and was soon to be, all hope was dead for him. The sight of the face and form he had never loved so well as now, — when she seemed so sweet and so lovable in her newly acquired womanliness — all this was unnerving him.

With these thoughts whirling through his brain, he stood looking at her, while he forced such an unnatural laugh as made her glance at him nervously and draw herself away.

"I 'm not like to see the old town for many a long day, I fear," he managed to say, his voice growing less strained as he saw the wondering look in her dark eyes; "and as for Polly Chine, you must find one more suited to my taste before you 've cause to wish me what I now wish you with all my heart."

With this he turned hastily away, and his mother asked, "You are going to get ready to start for Cambridge, child?"

"Yes," replied Dorothy, "I must leave at once."

"And can I do aught to help?" the good woman inquired.

Upon being assured that she could not, she cheer-

ily bade the girl make haste, and to remember that she was expected to return the next day.

"I shall miss the child sorely," she said, as the click of Dorothy's little heels died away on the floor above.

Hugh said nothing, but sighed heavily, as he stood looking out of the window with eyes that saw nothing.

His mother went to him and laid a gentle hand upon his broad shoulder.

"Oh, my son, my dear son," she said in a trembling voice, "my old heart is sore for you. I have hoped for years that— "

He whirled suddenly about.

"Don't mother — don't say any more — not now. Let me fight it out alone, and try to keep such a bearing as will prevent her from knowing the truth."

Then the passion in his voice died out, and he caressed her gray hair with a loving touch.

She drew his face down and kissed him.

"Come," she said, with an effort at cheerfulness, — "come into the other room and have speech with Mary before you go, else she 'll think we 've lost all proper sense of our manners. This is the first time you and she have met since her marriage."

CHAPTER XXXII

IT was evening when the party reached the headquarters at Cambridge.

A faint afterglow of the brilliant sunset still lingered, but the roadway leading to the entrance of the house was dusky with the shadows of coming night, which almost hid the great trees on either side.

The air about was filled with the faint hum of camp life. Occasionally a voice could be heard, or the neighing of a horse, — figures of men were discernible here and there, and a sentry was pacing before the steps of the mansion.

"Here we are, Dot," said her brother; and dismounting, he helped her from her horse. "Careful, child;" for she had tripped, her riding-skirt having become entangled about her feet as she followed him into the open doorway. "I will take you directly to the room prepared for you, and do you wait there until I return."

She said nothing, but held fast to his arm.

"Come, be brave," he whispered; "there is naught for you to fear." And he led her within, leaving Hugh Knollys with the other men outside.

The hall was spacious and well lighted. Several officers and privates were moving about, all of whom stared wonderingly at the unusual sight of a lady, — although it was not easy to decide whether it was a

woman or child — this dainty little figure in the riding-habit, who was looking about with unconcealed curiosity.

Far down the hall, to the left, her brother opened a door, showing a spacious, well-furnished chamber, where a wood fire was blazing, — for the night was drawing in chilly.

"Now take off your hat, child, and feel at home," he said, kissing her. "Remember there is naught to fear. It is only that we are wishing to fix matters for you, little one, so that you 'll be happy." And he kissed her again as she clung to his neck.

"Ah, Jack," she whispered, "you are so good to me!"

"I 've never had the wish to be other than good," he replied lovingly.

As soon as she was alone, Dorothy removed her hat, and then, as she stood by the hearth, watching the leaping flames, smoothed out her curls.

So engaged, and lost in thought, she did not hear the tapping upon the door, nor see that it opened softly and a man's figure paused on the threshold, as if watching the slight form standing by the fire, with the back turned squarely to him.

"Little one," came in a voice that startled the silence.

She turned like a flash, and although the firelight did not touch his face, it was not needed to tell her who it was.

He closed the door, and advanced with outstretched arms, laughing with exultation when she fled to them.

"You are still of the same mind as when we

parted?" he said, while he held her as if never meaning to let her go from him again.

"How can you ask?" And she nestled yet closer to him.

His only answer was to kiss her. Then, bringing a chair to the hearth, he seated himself, and attempted to draw her upon his knee. But she frustrated this by perching herself upon the arm of the chair, from which she looked triumphantly into his face.

"Your hands are cold, little one," he said, holding them against his cheek.

"We had a long ride," she replied, her eyes drooping before the intensity of his gaze.

"Aye, so you did; are you tired?"

"No, not at all," was her smiling answer, and her appearance did not belie the words.

"Hungry?" — with a little laugh, and tightening the clasp of his arm about her.

"No," again lifting her eyes to his happy face.

"Well, I have been hungry for days, and with a hunger that is now being happily appeased. But a supper is to be ready for you shortly, and then you are to see General Washington. Do you understand, sweetheart, what all this is about?" He was looking down at the small hands resting in one of his own, and smiling as he noted with a lover's eye how dainty and white they were.

"Yes," she said, "my brother explained all that to me."

"And you will come with me — now, at once, as soon as I can make my arrangements?" He spoke hurriedly, nervously.

"To England?" she asked, a very serious look now showing in her dark eyes.

"Aye, to England," he repeated in a tone whose firmness was contradicted by his perturbed face.

Disengaging one hand, her arm stole around his neck as she whispered, "I would go to the ends of the earth with you now."

He held her head away, the better to look into her face, as he said with a sigh of contentment: "Now I can breathe easy! You see I did not dare believe you would really come, — you 've ever been such a capricious little rebel."

Presently he asked, as he toyed with her small fingers, "Where got you all these different rings, little one?" and a note almost of jealousy sounded in his voice. "Here be many pretty brilliants — I thought maids in this country never wore such. How comes such a baby as you with a ring like this?" And he lifted her hand to look at the one which had attracted his special notice.

"My father gave it to me," she said quietly; "it was my mother's — whom I never saw."

He pressed his lips to the sparkling circlet. "My little wife, I 'll be mother, father — all things else to you. All of them together could not love you more truly and sacredly than do I. Ah, my darling, you have but poor knowledge of the way I love you, and how highly I prize your esteem. How can you, after the rough wooing to which I treated you?"

Then he whispered, "And where is the ruby ring?"

He felt her head stir uneasily against his shoulder.

"Surely you did not throw it away?" he asked after a moment's waiting.

Dorothy laughed, softly and happily.

"You told me that night at Master Weeks'," she whispered, "that you did not believe what my lips said, but what my eyes had shown you."

"Aye, so I did, and so I thought when I spoke. But until now I've been tossed about with such conflicting thoughts as scarce to know what to think."

"That may be so," she said, sitting erect to look at him. "But, believing what you read in my eyes then and before, think you I would throw away the ring?"

"Then where is it?" he asked again, smiling at her earnestness.

For answer she raised her hands to her neck, and undoing the fastening of a gold chain, drew it, with the ring strung upon it, from where they had rested, and laid them both in his hand.

His fingers closed quickly over them as he exclaimed, "Was there ever such a true little sweetheart?"

Then lifting her into his lap, he said, "You have never yet said to me in words that you really love me. Tell me so now — say it!"

"Think you that you have need for words?" A bit of her old wilfulness was now showing in her laughing eyes.

"Nay — truly no need, after what you have done for me, and have said you would go home with me. But there's a wish to hear such words, little one, and

to hear you speak my name — which, now that I think of it, I verily believe you do not even know."

She nodded smilingly, but did not answer.

"What is it?" he asked coaxingly, as he would have spoken to a child.

"Ah — I know it." And she laughed teasingly.

"Then say it," he commanded with mock fierceness. "Say it this minute, or I 'll — "

But her soft palm was against his lips, cutting short his threat.

"It is — Kyrle," she said demurely.

"Aye, so it is, and I never thought it could sound so sweet. Now say the rest of it — there 's a good child. Ah, little one," he exclaimed with sudden passion, "I can scarcely yet believe all this is true. Lay all doubt at rest forever by telling me you love me!"

The laughter was gone from her eyes, and a solemn light came into them.

"Kyrle Southorn, I love you — I do love you!"

They now heard voices and steps outside the door, and Dorothy sprang to her feet, while Captain Southorn arose hastily from the chair and set it back in place.

It was John Devereux who entered, followed by a soldier.

"Well, good people," he said cheerily, giving the young Britisher a glance of swift scrutiny, and then looking smilingly at Dorothy, "there is a supper waiting for this small sister of mine; and, Dot, you must come with me — and that speedily, as I am famishing."

He advanced and drew her hand within his arm; then turning with more dignity of manner to the Englishman, he added, "After we have supped, Captain Southorn, I will look for you in your room, as General Washington will then be ready to receive us."

Southorn bowed gravely. Then, with a sudden boyish impulsiveness, he extended his hand.

"May I not first hear from your own lips," he asked earnestly, "that you wish me well?"

Jack clasped the hand as frankly as it had been offered, and Dorothy's heart beat happily, as she saw the two dearest on earth to her looking with friendly eyes upon one another.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AN hour later the three stood before the door of Washington's private office; and in response to John Devereux's knock, the voice that was now so familiar to Dorothy bade them enter.

As they came into the room, Washington advanced toward Dorothy with his hand held out in greeting, and his eyes were filled with kindness as they looked into the charming face regarding him half fearfully.

"Welcome," he said, — "welcome, little Mistress Southorn."

At the sound of that name, heard now for the first time, a rush of color suffused Dorothy's cheeks, while the two younger men smiled, albeit each with a different meaning.

The one was triumphantly happy, but Jack's smile was touched with bitterness, and a sudden contraction, almost painful, caught his throat for a second.

"I trust that my orders were properly carried out for your comfort," continued Washington, still addressing Dorothy, as he motioned them all to be seated.

She courtesied, and managed to make a fitting reply. But she felt quite uncomfortable, and somewhat alarmed, to find her small self an object of so much consideration.

The Commander-in-Chief now seated himself, and turned a graver face to the young Englishman.

"May I ask, Captain Southorn, if the plans of which you told Lieutenant Devereux and myself are to be carried out?"

The young man bowed respectfully.

"I am most happy, sir, to assure you that they are, and at the speediest possible moment after I return to Boston."

Washington was silent a moment, and his eyes turned to Lieutenant Devereux, who, seemingly regardless of all else, was watching his sister.

"And you, Lieutenant, do you give your consent to all this?"

"Yes, sir." But the young man sighed.

"And now, little Mistress Southorn," Washington said, smiling once more, "tell me, have you consented to leave America and go with your husband?"

"Yes, sir," she replied almost sadly, and stealing a look at her brother's downcast face.

"It would seem, then, that the matter is settled as it should be, and to the satisfaction of all parties," Washington said heartily. "And I wish God's blessing upon both of you young people, and shall hope, Mistress Dorothy, that your heart will not be entirely weaned from your own land."

"That can never be, sir," she exclaimed with sudden spirit, and glancing almost defiantly at her husband, who only smiled in return.

"Aye, child — so? I am truly glad to hear it." Then rising from his chair, he said: "And now I must ask you to excuse me, as I have matters of importance

awaiting my attention, and regret greatly that I cannot spare more time thus pleasantly. You will escort your sister back to Dorchester in the morning, Lieutenant?"

"Aye, sir, with your permission."

"You have it; and you had better take the same number of men you had yesterday. Return as speedily as possible, as there are signs of—"

He checked himself abruptly, but swept away any suggestion of discourtesy by saying, as he held out his hand to the young Englishman, "I 'll bid you good-night, Captain Southorn; you see that it is natural now to think of you as a friend."

"It is an honor to me, sir, to hear you say as much," the other replied, as he took the extended hand and bowed low over it. "And I beg to thank you for all your kindness to me and to — my wife."

Dorothy now courtesied to Washington, and was about to leave the room, when he stretched out a detaining hand.

"Stay a moment, child. I am not likely to see you again before you depart, and therefore it is good-by as well as good-night. You will see that I have endeavored to do what was best for you, although I must admit" — and he glanced smilingly at Jack — "it was no great task for me to bring your brother to see matters as I did. And now may God bless you, and keep your heart the brave, true one I shall always remember."

She was unable to speak, and could only lift her eyes to the face of this great man, who, notwithstanding the weight of anxiety and responsibility pressing

upon him, had been the one to smooth away the troubles which had threatened to mar her young life, and who had now brought about the desire of her heart.

But his kindly look at length gave her courage, and she managed to say, although chokingly, "I can never find words in which to thank you, sir."

He bowed as the three left the room, and no word was spoken while they took their way down the hall to Dorothy's apartment.

Jack opened the door and motioned the others to enter.

"I must leave you now," he said, "and go to see Hugh Knollys. He is not feeling just right to-night."

"Why, is he ill? I wondered that he was not at supper with us." Dorothy spoke quickly, her voice trembled, and her brother saw that she was weeping.

He followed them into the room and closed the door. Then he turned to Dot, and taking her by the hand, asked tenderly, "What is troubling you, my dear child?"

She gave a great sob and threw herself upon his breast.

"'T is because of what he just said — as we left him. It made me realize that I am soon to go away across the sea from you — from all of you," she exclaimed passionately. "Oh — how can I bear it!"

"'T is somewhat late, little sister, to think of that," her brother replied, caressing her curly head with the loving touch she had known ever since the childhood days. Then bending his lips close to her ear, he whispered, "See — you are making him unhappy."

At this she glanced over her shoulder at her husband, who had walked to the hearth, and stood looking into the fire.

"Come, little girl, cheer up," said Jack, "for to-night, at least. You are to have a little visit with him before he returns to his quarters. And before to-morrow noon he will be on the road to Boston."

With a long, sobbing sigh, she released him; then, as she wiped the tears from her eyes, she said with a wan smile, "It is hard — cruelly hard, to have one's heart so torn in opposite ways."

He knew her meaning, and thought, as he went away, how small was their own grief compared with that of poor Hugh, who, utterly unmanned, had immured himself in his quarters.

Dorothy stole to the hearth, where stood the silent figure of her husband; and as he still did not speak, she ventured to reach out and steal a timid hand within the one hanging by his side.

His fingers instantly prisoned it in a close clasp, and so they remained for a time looking silently into the fire. Presently he sighed, and drawing the chain and ruby ring from his pocket, said very gently, "Will you wear this ring, sweetheart, until such time as I can get one more suitable?"

"Aye — but I 'd sooner not wear any other," she replied, looking wistfully at him, — awed and troubled by this new manner of his.

"Would you?" And he smiled as he fastened the chain about her neck. "Then I shall be obliged to have the half of it taken away, in order to make a proper fit for that small finger. But you must let me

put on a plain gold band, as well, so that all may be in proper form."

She caught his hand and laid it against her cheek, while the light of the burning wood caught in the ruby ring, making it gleam like a ruddier fire against the folds of her dark-green habit.

"Why are you so unhappy?" she asked.

"That I am not, sweet little wife," he answered, drawing her to him, "save when I see you unhappy."

"But I am not unhappy," she protested, adding brokenly, "except that — that — "

"Except that you cherish a warm love for kindred and home, and one it would be most unnatural for you to be lacking," he interrupted. "But never fear, little one," — and he stroked her hair much as her brother had done — "you will not be unhappy with me, if you love me; and that you say you do, and so I know it for a truth — thank God. This war cannot last very long, and I 've lost all heart to care whether King or colony win. To tell the truth," — and he laughed as he bent over to kiss her — "I fear my heart has turned traitor enough to love best the cause of her I love. So it is as well that I send in my resignation, which is certain to be accepted; and we 'll go straight to my dear old home among the Devonshire hills, and be happily out of the way of the strife. And when it is over, we can often cross the sea to your own home, and perhaps your brother and his wife — if I can ever make my peace with her — will also come to us. And so, sweetheart, you see the parting is not forever — nor for very long."

Thus he went on soothing and cheering her as he

seated himself again in the big chair by the hearth and drew her to his knee. Presently, and as if to divert her thoughts, he said: "Come — tell me something of your family. I have seen them all, as you know, but there are two of its members with whom I never had speech."

Dorothy puckered her brows and looked at him questioningly.

"They are wide apart as to age," he added, smiling at her perplexity, — "for one of them is a sweet-faced old lady, and the other is a lovely little girl with long yellow locks and wonderful blue eyes. She was with you that eventful day at the cave." And he laughed softly at the thought of what that day had brought about.

"Why, the old lady was Aunt Lettice, and the little girl is her granddaughter — 'Bitha Hollis, my cousin."

"She looks a winsome little thing — this 'Bitha," he said, happy to see the brightness come to Dorothy's face.

She was smiling, for the names had brought visions of her dear old home, and she seemed to see all the loving faces in the fire before her.

"Yes — and she is a dear child, and full of the oddest fancies." And now Dorothy laughed outright as some of 'Bitha's queer sayings came to her.

She went on to tell her husband of these; and when Jack returned half an hour later to escort Captain Southorn to his room, he found the two of them laughing happily together.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE next morning — although at rather a late hour for her — Dorothy arose, feeling greatly refreshed by her sound and dreamless sleep.

While she was yet dressing, her brother rapped on the door, and told her she was to go to the little room near by, where supper had been served the night before, and that Dolly — the sutler's wife — would have breakfast ready for her.

An hour later, as she stood at the open window of her room, drinking in the fresh morning air, still bearing the odor of fallen leaves wetted by the night damps, she saw her brother, with Captain Southorn and several other men, chatting together a short distance away.

Jack was the first to turn his eyes in her direction, and seeing her, he smiled and waved his hand, at which Captain Southorn turned about and hurried toward her.

He was soon standing under the window, and reaching up took possession of one of the small hands resting upon the sill.

For an instant neither of them spoke, but Dorothy's dark eyes smiled shyly into the blue ones uplifted to her face.

"And it is really true," he said at last, with an air of conviction. "Do you know, little one, that when I

awakened this morning, I was fearful at first that I 'd been dreaming it all. But knowing now what I do, how can I have the heart to go away and leave you again? Cannot you come to Boston with me now — this very day?"

She shook her head. "No, no, — I must not do that. I must go back to Dorchester, to see Mary and Mistress Knollys once more. And, too" — with a blush — "I could not go without any raiment besides this." And she touched the folds of her riding-habit.

He stood a minute as if thinking, and then asked if she would come out for a short walk.

"Most assuredly," was her smiling response; and turning from the window, she was not long in putting on her hat.

As she was about leaving the room, she noticed her riding-whip lying on the table where she had tossed it upon her arrival the previous evening. It was a gift from her father, and one she prized very highly; and fearing that the sight of it might excite the cupidity of some of the servants, she picked it up, and then passed quickly out to the porch.

Here she encountered several of the officers whom she had seen talking with her brother a short time before. They now drew aside to let her go by, which she did hurriedly, her eyes lowered under the shadowy plumes of her riding-hat, and oblivious of the admiring glances they stole at her.

Many of the inmates of Washington's headquarters had become acquainted with her little romance; and so, unknown to herself, she was an object of much interest. It was for this reason also, as well as on

account of the responsibility assumed with regard to him by Washington himself, that the English captain was occupying a somewhat unusual position amongst the American officers.

Finding her brother and husband together, the two coming to meet her at the porch, Dorothy asked after Hugh, and was told by Jack that he had gone with a message to some of the outposts, but would return shortly.

"And is he well this morning, Jack?"

"Oh, yes," her brother answered lightly. "You will not go far away, of course," he added, "nor stay long, else I shall have to come or send for you."

"Only a short distance;" and Captain Southorn motioned to the wood that lay not far from the rear of the house.

"Who is this Hugh?" he inquired, as they walked slowly along, the dry leaves crackling under their feet. "Is he the sergeant, Hugh Knollys, who went with your brother yesterday?"

"Yes;" and something in his tone impelled her to add, "and I 've known him all my life."

"Oh, yes," he said, knitting his brows a little, as he kicked the leaves before him, "I remember right well. It was he I used to see riding about the country with you so much last summer."

"He is like my own brother," she explained quickly, not feeling quite comfortable in something she detected in his manner of speech.

"Is he?" now looking at her smilingly. "And does he regard you in the same fraternal fashion?"

"Why, of course," she answered frankly. "Hugh and I have always known one another; we have gone riding and boating together for years, have quarrelled and made up, just as Jack and I have done. Only," and now she spoke musingly, "I cannot remember that Jack ever quarrelled much with me."

"No, I should say not, from what I 've seen of him," her husband said heartily.

By this time they were in the seclusion of the wood; and now his arms went about her and held her fast.

"Sweetheart, tell me once more that you love me," he said. "I only brought you here to have you tell it to me again, and in broad daylight."

She rested her head on his arm and smiled up into his face.

"How many times must I tell you?"

"With each sweet breath you draw, if you tell me as many times as I would wish to hear. But this is certain to be the last moment I shall have to see you alone, as you are to start for Dorchester, and I for Boston. And you will surely — surely join me there as soon as I send you word?" He spoke eagerly, and as if fearful that something might arise to make her change her mind.

"Yes, to be sure I will, — have I not promised?"

"That you have, God bless you. And you will let no one turn you from that, little one?"

"Why, who should?" She opened her eyes in surprise, and then there came a flash to them. "No, no, even if every one was to try, they could not do it now. What is that?"

She started nervously, and turned her head quickly about, as they both heard a rustling in the bushes.

"It is only a rabbit or squirrel," her husband said, "or perhaps a —"

There was the sharp report of a gun close by, and a bullet grazed his shoulder and struck the tree-trunk directly over Dorothy's head. The next instant there came the sound of trampling and fierce struggling; and a voice Dorothy knew at once, cried, "You sneaking dastard, what murder is it you're up to?"

"Stop here, little one," said Captain Southorn, calmly, "just a second, until I see what all this means." And he plunged into the tangled thicket beside the path in which they had been standing.

But Dorothy followed him closely; and a few yards away they came upon Hugh Knollys, towering angrily over a man lying prostrate on the ground, and whom Dorothy recognized instantly as the rude fellow who had so alarmed her at the inn.

At sight of the two figures breaking through the underbrush, Hugh started in surprise, and a look which Dorothy found it hard to understand showed in his face.

"What is it — what is the matter?" Captain Southorn demanded angrily, stepping toward the two other men.

Hugh did not reply, and now they heard rapid footsteps approaching.

"Here, this way, — come here!" shouted Hugh, who did not appear to have heard the young Englishman's question.

Farmer Gilbert had arisen slowly to his feet, and did not attempt to escape from the grasp Hugh still kept upon his arm.

"Oh, Hugh — what is it?" asked Dorothy, looking with frightened eyes at his prisoner.

"Never mind now, Dot," he answered hastily, but his voice softening. "How came you here? You should not —" Then, with a half-sulky glance as of apology to the young Englishman, he bit his lip and was silent.

"We were standing in the path just now," said Captain Southorn, "when a bullet came so close to us as to do this;" and he touched the torn cloth on his shoulder.

Hugh started. "Then it must have been you he was shooting at!" he exclaimed, glancing angrily at the prisoner.

"The bullet went just over my head and into a tree," said Dorothy, continuing her husband's explanation.

"Over your head, Dot!" cried Hugh. "So close to you as that!" And a terrible look came to his face, — one that revealed his secret to the purple-blue eyes watching him so keenly. "Oh — my God!"

The appearance of several men — soldiers — cut the words short, and restored Hugh's calmness, for, turning to them, he bade them take the man and guard him carefully.

"And I'll take this gun of yours," he said to him, "and see to it that you get the treatment you deserve for such a cowardly bit of work."

"Wait a bit, till I answers him," said Farmer Gilbert, now speaking for the first time, as he turned to face Hugh, and holding back, so as to arrest the steps of the men who were dragging him away. "I want to say, young sir, that if ye had n't sneaked up on me from aback, an' knocked my gun up, I 'd hev done what I 've been dodgin' 'round to do these five days past — an' that were to put a bullet through the head or d——d trait'rous heart o' that British spy in petticoats."

His face was ablaze with passion, and he shook his clenched fist at Dorothy, who stood looking at him as though he were a wild beast caught in the toiler's net.

Captain Southorn started forward; but Hugh motioned him back. Then realizing the full sense of the fellow's words, he sprang upon him with an oath such as no one had ever heard issue from his lips.

Falling upon the defenceless man, he shook him fiercely. Then he seemed to struggle for a proper control of himself, and asked chokingly, "Do you mean to tell me that it was her you were aiming at when I caught you?"

He pointed to Dorothy, who was now clinging to her husband; and even in that moment Hugh saw his arm steal about her protectingly.

He turned his eyes away, albeit the sight helped to calm his rage, as the bitter meaning of it swept over him.

"Aye — it was," the man answered doggedly, nodding his bushy head; "an' ye may roll me o'er the ground again, like a log that has no feelin', an' send

me to prison atop it all, for tryin' to do my country a sarvice by riddin' it of a spy."

The soldiers who were holding him looked significantly at each other and then at Dorothy, who was still standing within the protecting arm of the man they knew to be an English officer, and a prisoner who had been captured, alone and at night, close to the spot where the Commander-in-Chief was engaged in a conference with some of his subordinates.

Despite the fright to which she had been subjected, the girl was quick to see all this, and the suspicion to which it pointed. And she now astonished them all by leaving her husband's side, to advance rapidly until she stood facing the soldiers and their prisoner, who cowered away as he saw the flash of her eyes, and her small figure drawn to its utmost height.

"Do you dare say to my face that I am a British spy — I, Dorothy Devereux, of Marblehead, whose only brother is an officer in Glover's regiment? You lying scoundrel — take that!" And raising her riding-whip, she cut him sharply across the face, the thin lash causing a crimson welt to show upon its already florid hue. "And that," giving him another cut. "And do you go to General Washington, and tell him your wicked story, and I doubt not he 'll endorse the writing of the opinion I 've put upon your cowardly face for saying such evil falsehoods of me!"

"Dot — Dorothy — whatever does this mean?" It was the voice of her brother, as he dashed to her side and caught her arm, now lifted for another blow.

She shivered, and the whip fell to the ground,

while Hugh ordered the men to take their prisoner away.

They obeyed, grinning shyly at each other, and now feeling assured that no British spy was amongst them.

Captain Southorn had stood motionless, looking at Dorothy in unconcealed amazement. But her quick punishment of the fellow's insult seemed to have a good effect upon Hugh Knollys, for his face now showed much of its sunny good-nature.

The sight of what she had done, no less than the sound of her voice, had brought back the impetuous, wilful Dot of bygone days; and he found himself thinking again of the little maid whose ears he boxed because of the spilled bullets, years ago.

CHAPTER XXXV

"DOROTHY, speak, — what is it?" her brother demanded. "Hugh?" and he turned questioningly, as Dorothy threw herself into his arms.

"He called me a British spy," she sobbed, "and tried to shoot me!"

He held her closer, while he listened to Hugh and Captain Southorn as they told him of all that had passed.

It appeared that Hugh, returning through the woods from his mission to the outposts, had found a horse tied not far away from where they were now standing. This struck him as something unusual; and looking about, he noticed that the bushes were trampled and broken in a direction which seemed to lead toward Washington's headquarters.

Suspecting a possible spy, he had cautiously followed the plainly marked way, and soon caught sight of a man dodging about, as if not wishing to be seen, and so intent upon watching something in front of him as to be quite unconscious of Hugh's approach.

Stealing as close as possible, Hugh stood silent, now aware that the man's attention was centred upon the regular pathway through the wood.

Presently he saw him raise his gun, and feared it might be Washington himself at whom he was aiming; for he knew the Commander-in-Chief was to be abroad

that morning, and he made no doubt that this was some emissary of the enemy bent upon murdering him.

Thinking only of this, Hugh had thrown himself upon the man, but too late to prevent the discharge of the gun, although he succeeded in diverting its aim.

"And saved her life!" exclaimed Captain Southorn and John Devereux together.

Hugh uttered no word until Dorothy turned to him suddenly and took his hand, while she looked up at him in a way that needed no speech.

"Never mind, Dot," he said huskily. "You gave him a fine lesson, just such as he deserved, and it does me good to think of it. Only, I'd like to have done it myself."

She blushed, and dropped his hand, stealing a sidewise glance at her husband, who was looking at Hugh and herself.

Jack was now about to speak; but Hugh started quickly, exclaiming, "This will never do; I am forgetting my duty, and must hurry on and make my report."

"One second, Hugh," said Jack; "I have something to say to you."

They walked along together, conversing in low tones, while Dorothy, with a nervous little laugh, said to her husband, "Are you afraid of me, now that you see the temper I possess?"

"Nay, little one," he answered, drawing closer to her and taking her hand. "You did nothing more than the circumstances richly provoked. And," with

a teasing laugh, "I do not forget a certain day, in another wood, when my own cheek felt the weight of this same dainty hand's displeasure."

She looked a bit uncomfortable, and he hastened to add, "And I felt afterward that I, too, received but my just deserts for my presumption."

"I always wondered," she said, now smilingly, "what you could think of a young lady who would rig herself up in her brother's raiment, to roam about at night; and who would so far forget herself as to slap a gentleman in the face, — and one of His Majesty's officers at that."

He laughed. "Then you must know, sweet wife," he answered, as she stood looking down, stirring the leaves with her boot tip, "that I only loved you the better, if possible, for it all. It showed you to possess a brave heart and daring spirit, such as are ever the most loyal to the man a true woman loves. But for all those same acts of yours, I 'd not have dared to do as I did; but I felt that no other course would lead you to follow the feeling I was sure I read in your eyes."

John Devereux, who had gone out to the roadway with Hugh, now called to them.

"Come, both of you," he said; "it is time to be off."

"This must be our real good-by, little one." Captain Southorn glanced about them, and then put his arm around Dorothy. "We shall both be leaving shortly, and I cannot say good-by properly with a lot of other folk about. Ah," with a shudder, and holding her up to his breast, "when I think of what

might have happened, had not your friend Hugh come upon the scene, it makes it all the harder for me to let you go again."

"But there is no danger now," she said courageously; "the man is a prisoner. But whatever could have put such a crazy idea into his head?" she asked indignantly.

"Did you never see him before?" her husband inquired.

"Yes, at the Gray Horse Inn;" but her brother's voice, now calling rather impatiently, cut short her story.

"And will you come when I send word?" Captain Southorn asked.

"Yes," she whispered.

"Well, thank God it will be but a few days until then," he said, giving her a parting kiss. "So for now, my wife, — my own little wife, adieu!"

As they were taking their way to the house, Jack looked at his watch and scowled a little as he saw the lateness of the hour. Then he turned to Dorothy, and inquired, as her husband had done, in regard to her knowledge of Farmer Gilbert.

She told of all that Mary and herself had seen of him at the inn; and her brother's quick perceptions put the facts together while he listened.

They found gathered before the house an unusual number of men, in animated conversation; but as the three figures approached, they all became silent, glancing at the new-comers in a way to indicate that the recent occurrence had formed the subject of their discussion.

Some of them now strolled away, while those who remained — all of them connected with the headquarters — drew aside to let Lieutenant Devereux and his companions pass.

"Do you know if Sergeant Knollys is within, Harris?" Jack inquired, addressing one of them.

"Yes, I am quite sure you will find him inside."

Turning to another of the men, Jack bade him have the horses brought at once, and order the escort to be ready for immediate departure.

"We shall have to hasten, Dot," he said hurriedly, as they went along the hall. "And," addressing her husband, "Captain Southorn, I must now turn you over to Captain Ireson."

"Then I am not like to see you again," said the young Englishman, as he extended his hand.

"No, I should have gone to Boston with you, to escort Captain Pickett on his return, but I have orders to see my small sister safely to the house and care of our neighbor, Mistress Knollys."

"And when are we to meet again?"

He spoke earnestly, almost with emotion, for he had come to have a strong affection for this handsome, high-spirited young Colonist, whose face and manner so resembled Dorothy's.

"Who can say?" asked Jack, sadly, as the two stood with clasped hands, looking fixedly at one another.

"Well, God grant that it be before long, and when our countries are at peace," exclaimed Southorn.

"Amen to that," answered Jack. "And," in a voice that trembled, "you will always be good to —"

The sentence was left unfinished, while his arm stole about his sister's shoulders.

"As God is my witness, — always," was the solemn reply.

"And now, Dot," said her brother, with a contented sigh, and speaking in a more cheerful tone, as if now throwing off all his misgivings, "you must bid Captain Southorn farewell for a few days, and we will get under way. But first I have to go with him and report to Captain Ireson."

She held out both hands to her husband, who bent over and pressed them to his lips.

"You will surely come when I send?" he asked softly.

She nodded, looking up at him through her tears.

In half an hour the party of soldiers, with Dorothy and her brother, took the way to Dorchester, Hugh appearing at the last moment to say farewell, as his duty called him in another direction. And it was not long before a smaller party, bearing a flag of truce, set out with Captain Southorn, to effect his exchange for Captain Pickett.

The following day Farmer Gilbert was brought before General Washington, who listened gravely to his attempted justification. Then, after a stern rebuke, so lucid and emphatic as to enlighten the man's dull wits, now made somewhat clearer by his confinement and enforced abstinence, he was permitted to go his way.

A week after this, little Mistress Southorn was escorted to the British lines and handed over to her waiting husband; and a few days later, a transport

sailed, taking back to England some disabled officers and soldiers, as well as a small number of royalists, who were forced to leave the country for the one whose cause they espoused too openly.

Dorothy was standing by the ship's rail, alone, her husband having left her for a few minutes. She was busy watching the stir and bustle of departure, when she recognized, in a seeming farmer who had come aboard with poultry, the pedler, Johnnie Strings.

The sight of his shrewd face and keen little eyes brought to her mingled feelings of pleasure and alarm, and, wondering what his mission could be, she hurried toward him.

"Oh, Johnnie, is it safe for you to be here?" she exclaimed, as she grasped his hand.

"Sh-h, sweet mistress!" he said cautiously. "I won't be safe if ye sing out in such fashion. Jest ye get that scared look off yer face, while we talk nat'ral like, for the sake o' them as stands 'round. Ye see I was the only one that could risk comin', an' I'm to carry back the last news o' ye. But oh, Mistress Dorothy," and his voice took a note of expostulation, "however had ye the heart to do it? But o' course we all know 't was not really yer own doin', arter all. I tell ye, mistress, that mornin' at the Sachem's Cave saw the beginnin' of a sight o' mischief."

She passed this by without comment, smiling at him kindly while she gave him many parting messages for those at Dorchester, and for Aunt Lettice and little 'Bitha, and all at the old house.

The pedler promised to deliver them, and then looking into her face, he sighed mournfully.

"Aye, but 't is thankful I am, mistress, that yer old father ne'er lived to see this day."

"Oh, Johnnie, don't say that — how can you?" she cried impulsively.

He saw the pained expression his words had brought, and added hastily, as he drew the back of his hand across his eyes, "There, there, sweet mistress, don't take my foolish words to heart, for my own is so sore this day over all that's come to pass, an' that ye should be goin' away like this, that I scarce know jest what I be sayin'."

Before Dorothy could reply, she saw her husband approaching; and Johnnie, seeing him as well, turned to go.

"Won't you wait and speak to him?" she asked, a little shyly.

"No, no, Mistress Dorothy," was his emphatic answer, — "don't ye ask that o' me. I could n't stummick it — not I. God keep ye, sweet mistress, an' bring ye back to this land some day, when we 've driven out all the d——d redcoats."

With this characteristic blessing, the pedler hastened away, and was soon lost to sight amongst the barrels and casks piled about the wharf.

A few hours later, Dorothy stood with her husband's arm about her, watching through gathering tears the land draw away, — watching it grow dim and shadowy, to fade at last from sight, while all about them lay the purple sea, sparkling under the rays of the late afternoon sun.

Her eyes lingered longest upon the spot in the hazy distance near where she knew lay the beloved old home

"How far — how far away it is now," she murmured.

"What, little one?" her husband asked softly.

"I was thinking of my old home," she answered, surprised to have spoken her thought aloud. "And," looking about with a shiver, "it seems so far — so lonely all about us here."

"Are you frightened or unhappy?" he asked, drawing her still closer to him.

She looked up with brave, loyal eyes, and answered, as had her ancestress, Anne Devereux, when she and her young husband were about to seek a new home in a strange, far-off land, —

"No — not so long as we be together."

Hugh Knollys fell — a Major in the Massachusetts line — during one of the closing engagements of the war, and his mother did not long survive him.

John Devereux passed through the conflict unharmed, and returned to the farm, where he and Mary lived long and happily, with their children growing up about them.

They had each summer as their guests an Englishman and his wife — a little, girl-like woman, whom every one adored — who crossed the sea to pay them long visits. Sometimes the pleasant days found this Englishman seated in the Sachem's Cave, his eyes wandering off over the sea; and with him often would be Mary Broughton's eldest son, and first-born — Jack, who had his Aunt Dorothy's curling locks and dark eyes.

The favorite story at such times, and one never

tired of by either the man or child, was that telling how in the great war his mother had frightened a young English soldier so that he fell over the rocks, and how, soon after this, a certain brave little maid had hurled the burning lanterns from these same rocks, to save her brother and his companions from danger.

The youngster had first heard of all this from Johnnie Strings, — to the day of his death a crippled pensioner on the Devereux farm — who never seemed to realize that the war was over, and who had expressed marked disapproval when 'Bitha, now tall and stately, had, following her Cousin Dorothy's example, and quite regardless of her own long-ago avowals, given her heart and hand to the nephew of this same British soldier.

With this must end my story of the old town. But there is another story, — that of its fisher and sailor soldiers, and it is told in the deeds they have wrought.

These form a goodly part of the foundation upon which rests the mighty fabric of our nation. Their story is one of true, brave hearts; and it is told in a voice that will be heard until the earth itself shall have passed away.

It was the men of Marblehead who stepped forward that bitter winter's night on the banks of the Delaware, when Washington and his little army looked with dismayed eyes upon the powerful current sweeping before them, and which must be crossed, despite the great masses of ice that threatened destruction

to whosoever should venture upon its roaring flood. They were the men who responded to his demand when he turned from the menacing dangers of the river and asked, "Who of you will lead on, and put us upon the other side?"

The monument that commemorates the success at Trenton is no less a tribute to the unflinching courage and sturdiness of the fishermen of Marblehead, who made that victory possible.

And, as there, so stands their record during all the days of the Revolutionary struggle. Wherever they were — on land or water — in the attack they led, in the retreat they covered; and through all their deeds shone the ardent patriotism, the calm bravery, the unflinching devotion, that made them ever faithful in the performance of duty.

> "When anything is done,
> People see not the patient doing of it,
> Nor think how great would be the loss to man
> If it had not been done. As in a building
> Stone rests on stone, and, wanting a foundation,
> All would be wanting; so in human life,
> Each action rests on the foregone event
> That made it possible, but is forgotten,
> And buried in the earth."

When the dawn of peace came, nowhere was it hailed with more exultant joy than in Marblehead.

Nowhere in all the land had there been such sacrifices made as by the people of this little town by the sea. Many of those who had been wealthy were now reduced to poverty, — their commerce was ruined, their blood had been poured out like water.

But for all this there was no complaining by those who were left, no upbraiding sorrow for those who would never return. There was only joy that the struggle was ended, and independence achieved for themselves and the nation they had helped to create. And down the long vista of years between their day and our own, the hallowed memory of their loyalty shines out as do the lights of the old town over the night sea, whose waves sing for its heroes a fitting requiem.

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